Jemaah Islamiyah leader confirms MILF support

Story on Page A2

AFP, Malaysia hope 5 hostages still alive

By Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A kidnapped Malaysian resort worker, who escaped from his abductors in Tuan (late) last week, has recounted his claim that five of his fellow hostages had been killed by their captors, the military yesterday

A20 A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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- GMA 7, Probe Team end 16-year partnership
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PRO-IMPEACHMENT. Elderly women with clenched fists rear the frontline of a rally against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. before the Supreme Court Monday. The members of the Kilusan Para sa Malayang Lipunan at Gobyerno said the Chief Justice must face trial by the impeachment court.

PRO-GMA'ERS. A newly formed alliance warns that powerful vested interests are behind the move to impeach Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. They called on the people to "call, text, e-mail or mail" the congressmen who signed the impeachment complaint. Among the group's leaders are Fr. Robert Reyes of Guimbarra, Ric Reyes of Akbayan, Bong Montoya of Libertas and Chuck Lazarte.

NPC threatens Joe de V

Impeachment bloc to unseat Speaker if Lakas bid succeeds

By Jaen Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau
and Carlito Pablo in Manila

NAGA CITY—The core group of congressmen which filed the second impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. will not take the ruling Lakas party's *agaw-pirma* (signature-snatching) campaign sitting down. If the campaign succeeds, pro-impeachment congressmen led by the Nationalist People's Coalition said they would move to unseat Speaker Jose de Venecia himself.

Rep. Felix William "Wimpy" Fuentebella, one of the two principal signatories to the complaint, said yesterday his group has a major plan to unseat De Venecia in case the House fails to transmit the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate.

But other congressmen identified with either the impeachment drive or the campaign to stop it began talking yesterday about specific "principled solutions" to resolve the constitutional crisis.

Pro-impeachment Rep. Constantino Jaraula (LDE Cagayan de Oro City) made public a five-point formula for settling the crisis, which drew positive initial feedback from NPC spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero and anti-impeachment advocate Representatives Butch Abad and Tito Roxdas.

But Fuentebella stayed on message, saying the plan to unseat De Venecia would depend on what

NPC, A4

Cebu solon barraged by hate text over Davide stand

By Jhanna Napallacan
and Suzzane B. Saka
PDI Visayas Bureau

A MEMBER of the House of Representatives has found herself being harassed through text messages and telephone calls for signing the impeachment complaint against fellow Cebuano, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

Cebu Rep. Nerissa Soon-Ruiz of the sixth district has been deluged with text messages after her name surfaced as among those who

CEBU, A6

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NPC, A4

MOVE OVER 'GG'
President Macapagal declares the stupa—not galunggong—the new "food of the masses." The President helps disperse tilapia fingerlings in Barangay Pulingan, Calamba, Laguna, during the 34th anniversary of the Laguna Lake Development Authority. Story on Page 3.

Businessmen give Congress thumbs down

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE MORE senators and congressmen push the impeachment of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., the more Congress loses its credibility —at least among businessmen.

In an interview with ABS-CBN News Channel 21 yesterday, Philippine-based business consultant Peter Wallace said the latest move by Congress to impeach Davide has done little to improve its credibility.

The latest quarterly survey by Wallace's firm on the economic outlook of CEOs of multinational corporations operating in the Philippines showed how low the credibility of Congress had sunk.

The survey asked 62 CEOs, many of them Filipinos, how they would rate the perfor-

BUSINESSMEN, A4

House lawyer finds Davide case too hot to handle

By Carlito Pablo,
Volt Contreras
and Michael Lim Ubac

FINDING the impeachment case against the Chief Justice too hot to handle, lawyer Mario Oreglita has declined the offer of the House of Representatives to be its private counsel.

Oreglita, who was supposed to assist the House in responding to the Supreme Court's status quo order on the impeachment of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., informed Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. of his decision on Friday.

While the House failed to enlist the services of Oreglita, it got support from opposition Rep. Agapito Aquino Jr.

HOUSE, A4

GMA asks for divine intervention again

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

SEEKING to rise above the crisis involving co-equal branches of government, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday sought help from someone who has no equal: God.

Mr Macapagal appealed for divine intervention to resolve the constitutional crisis arising from the House move to impeach Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

Hearing Mass in Malacañang, the President hinted that the hand of God would prevail no less 18 tribes

GMA, A6

AFP puts troops on nationwide alert

By TJ Burgonio
and Christine Avendaño

THE MILITARY announced yesterday that it was placing its men on nationwide red alert starting today amid fresh rumors that some military officers were agitating their colleagues to mount another destabilization attempt.

The upgrading of the alert status from white to red takes effect at 7 a.m. today. The red alert is the highest in the Armed Forces' three-tiered alert level scheme.

Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, military chief information officer, said the red alert declaration was in anticipation of protest rallies over the impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. and not an offshoot of a fresh round of coup rumors.

"This alert status is meant to prepare our civil management units for any eventual rallies that will be conducted by some concerned groups," he said at a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo.

"I'd like to stress here that this alert level status has nothing to do with these rumors being spread that some members of the AFP will be joining any destabilization move," he added.

An undetermined number of troops will be deployed at the Edsa Shrine in Quezon City and "its environs" to aid the civil disturbance management units of the national police, Lucero said.

The Philippine National Police yesterday downplayed fears of a coup. But the PNP will now more than 480 officers to train primarily in civil disturbance management (CDM) at Camp Crame in preparation for more impeachment-related mass actions.

This deployment includes at least 200 members of CDM units from Central Luzon and the Cal-abarzon area and two companies from the Headquarters Support Service and the elite Special Action Force. The Central Luzon contingent arrived at around 10 p.m. Sunday.

Chief Supt. Enrique Gabeg,

AFP, A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2003
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

JI leader confirms MILF help

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE SECOND-ranking leader of the Jemaah Islamiyah in the Philippines has confirmed that the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has been supporting the operations of the regional terrorist network in Mindanao, a senior police official said yesterday.

The official said that Dolpin Bolbe, who is also JI's paymaster in the country, revealed during interrogation that the MILF provided JI operatives with safe houses and facilities where they could train new recruits to the Islamic militant group.

The MILF has consistently denied enabling JI operatives in its camps and has neither offered to assist the government in its crackdown on members of the terrorist network.

But the source said that the 33-year-old Bolbe was in touch with the MILF on several occasions because as JI's finance and liaison officer in the Philippines, he facilitated the arrival of recruits to JI training schools in the country.

These were halted only after Bolbe was arrested at a hotel in Cotabato City on Oct. 3. His arrest led to the raid on a suspected JI hideout in Cotabato City where ammunition, explosives, improvised bomb-making equipment and radical Islamic literature. He is now in the custody of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"Based on Bolbe's confession and reports that are in from recruiting from the field," the source told the Inquirer on condition of anonymity, "the JI is still getting a certain amount of support from the MILF's subunits."

Contradiction

Bolbe's revelation contradicted MILF's continued pronouncement that it had long severed ties with any terrorist organization, most in the JI, which it believed to have links to the al-Qaida terrorist network of Osama bin Laden.

But with the scheduled peace talks between the government and the MILF, the official said the secessionist group has limited its support to allowing its "lands and like" to serve as hideaways for JI operatives coming to the Philippines from neighboring countries, particularly Indonesia.

The JI, according to the source, no longer needs the MILF in finding safe houses because the group already has several of these scattered in Mindanao as admitted by Bolbe during interrogation.

The official said both the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces were now racing to find those hideouts before the JI could stage any terrorist strike. So far, authorities were successful only in Cotabato City.

Confidence-building

On Sunday, MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu even offered to help the government hunt down around 20 JI members believed to be hiding in Mindanao, as a confidence-building measure for the upcoming peace negotiations.

Minutes of the ongoing "tie-up" between the JI and the MILF, the official said, the PNP was giving the secessionist group the "benefit of the doubt" and was welcoming Kabalu's offer to help in the government's anti-terrorism efforts.

"We don't want to scrap or ruin the peace talks or we're scraping that the MILF is always acting in good faith," he said.

An initial step toward the negotiation was the May 6, 2003, signing of a joint communique in which the government and the MILF agreed to the "isolation and interdiction of all criminal syndicates and kidnap-for-ransom groups, including so-called 'Jean communal' operating in Mindanao."

Part of the agreement was the creation of a joint action group composed of representatives from the PNP AFP and the MILF. The group would serve as a "clearing house" for all operations that the government would conduct in MILF territories in Mindanao, according to Deputy Director Gen. Victor Ela, PNP chief for operations and supervisor to the joint action group.

In the development, Bishop Bishop Bernardo Capalla yesterday expressed his approval to MILF's offer to hunt down JI operatives in Mindanao, saying this was a "point for the ongoing talks."

Capalla, incoming president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said he believed in the sincerity of the MILF to help the government achieve peace in the region. With a report from Ricardo T. Rivero

US troops here to train amid tight security

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—At least 500 Filipino military personnel, some of them fresh from assignments in Iraq, have been barred from leaving the Talon Heights training camps here amid security concerns.

"There's no planned move or liberty while we are here," said Col. Steven Basby Tukan II, spokesperson, of the 1,500 Filipino servicemen which he said began here on Monday.

Basby said not a single US soldier would be spending time on "R and R" in the bars, restaurants and karaoke joints on Fields Ave., Angeles City's red light district.

"Not for this exercise, no. We are here to train. That's what we're here for," he said. "We have some security intensive plans."

In a joint statement, Sgt. Alice Moddy's opening ceremony during which he was briefed by Maj. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, Philippine Army Northern Luzon Command chief, on the country's different threat groups. Basby said the problem of terrorism is not confined to Mindanao.

"Our force protection is always our No. 1 priority," he said, adding that the security measures put in place by the Philippine military and police as well as the Clark Special Economic Zone were "more than sufficient."

Tolentino identified the threat groups as the New People's Army, the Moslem separatist groups and Abdujaz-ber-ransom gangs like the Abu Sayyaf and Rengasan.

Sir Talon Heights, which is being held mainly at Clark and the Cuva Valley firing range in Capas, Tarlac, the 1D paratroopers is using the CH-53 E, four CH-47 D helicopters and four UH-1 H Huey helicopters, Basby said. Also in the fleet are two KC-130 cargo planes.

Priscilla Dejas and Jun Mullig, PIR Central Luzon Desk

Traders demand Comelec execs' heads

By Norman Bordadora

A BUSINESSMEN organization of Cotabato town and professionals has sought the resignation of all top officials of the Commission on Elections for their alleged faulty handling of the botching by automated counting machines.

The group, Moro Pagsisa, yesterday also asked the government to declare the nullification of the May 2004 elections due to the alleged deficiency of the automated counting machines that would be used in some regions.

"Iba-ka-giwa kompetensya and nagpanon ng manonder graft and corruption sa mga opisyal ng Comelec, isa-dismissed ng Comelec en banc mga mamahalin," said Fernando Cardinoza, Moro Pagsisa spokesperson.

Cardinoza said the Comelec acted with undue haste when it bid out the contract for the counting machines. Only two companies submitted bids for the project and both fell short of the requirements, he said.

"We ask the President to appoint truly honest, indispensable and very competent new Comelec commissioners immediately," Cardinoza said in an e-mail to the Inquirer.

"We have completely lost our trust and confidence in the current Comelec commissioners for very good reasons.

Needless to say the new commissioners should not be party-list or local-level politicians," he added.

Moro Pagsisa urged the government to cancel the Comelec's contract with Mega Pacific Solutions because of the alleged rigged bidding and technical deficiencies of the machines, which Cardinoza said depend too much on the human factor.

"The machines should be scrapped and the money should be refunded to the national treasury," Cardinoza said.

He added that for lack of time, the Comelec should resort to manual counting of votes nationwide.

The Comelec, however, said there would be partial automated elections in 2004 in areas such as Metro Manila and the autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

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'Jericho agents good only for 6 mos'

THE Ross Jericho was not abolished, operatives were merely recalled to their mother units.

DILG Secretary Joey Lina said a new Jericho would be fielded once "a batch of agents is really good, with he (at) months," he told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

The Department of Interior and Local Government yesterday denied published reports to the demise of the task force, which was formed to curb illegal gambling, specifically jueteng.

Lina refuted allegations the Jericho agents had failed to deliver. In short, a deployment statement said, the were a routine redeploy "to prevent familiarization between the officers and their supposed targets, the gambling lords."

DILG Undersecretary Ephyro Mercia had a slightly different explanation. In a memorandum he issued regarding the effective Dec. 1, was in accordance with the "career shifting" being implemented by the Philippine National Police for its officers-and-men.

Lina was also assured by other members that he had not resigned over what he self-imposed deadline to curb jueteng exposed last June.

He said people should not raise a fuss over this, since it was not his primary responsibility to see who's illegal gambling operations. Antonio F. Flores and Christine Reguero

Noelle Dejito and Jun Mullig, PIR Central Luzon Desk

Erap upbeat about US trip, denies anew he would flee

By Armand Nocum

QUOTED President Joseph Estrada yesterday said he was optimistic the Sandiganbayan will find enough reasons to let him go to the United States, given his deteriorating physical condition, which could result in the postponement of his trial.

At the same time, the ex-president alleged fears he was a flight risk, saying he could never find a life away from the country. "It's not my plan. My plan is here," said Estrada, adding he would retire his loyal friends and supporters here.

Estrada is to travel before the Thanksgiving season and spend two months for physical therapy and medical check-up.

Estrada's personal surgeon, Dr. Lorenzo Herrera, said the operation and therapy would take about three months. But Estrada could be given to spend one month of this up here.

"I cannot stay in the US that long. I will easily get homesick," Estrada told the historian in a telephone interview.

At present but he would not flee, Estrada said he turned down Senate Pro Tempore Aquilino Pimentel's offer for him to leave the country shortly after he was arrested.

"The offer was made even before the plunder charges were filed. I declined to take the offer. So, why will I do that now?" he said.

More than the risk of flight, he said he fears the possibility the government will bar him from returning to his country. He would be allowed to leave, he said he would ask for a provisional guarantee that he would be allowed to return.

Orthopedic surgeon at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Alabang, where Estrada has undergone an extensive medical checkup, said the former president's stroke in his lower have greatly affected his ability to walk and this lack of movement has caused his spine to be "deformed" and "unregulated."

It can operated on immediately, Estrada's "internal knee disarrangement" could result in his becoming paralyzed, they said.

They recommended that a knee replacement operation be done as soon as possible.

Pangasinan not keen on FPJ, officials say

By Yolanda Sondo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN, Pangasinan—Movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. would not get the support of Pangasinanan if he decides to run for the presidency all though he travels a lot to Pangasinan since President Macapagal-Arroyo is likewise from this province, local officials said.

Officials said Mr. Macapagal's mother, former First Lady Evangelista Macapang , hailed from Lingayen.

Not afraid of Poe

Mayor Ramon Guico, president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, said the administration party Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats is not afraid of Poe because the "party leadership already knows how to counter his popularity."

Guico, a closest cronies of Mr. Macapagal's, said Poe does not pose a threat to Mr. Macapagal's presidential bid because the actor does not know anything about governance.

Guico has asked Lakas leaders to challenge Poe to a debate on how to manage the country, "so the people will know who is who" he really a star what he knows about running a government."

"Poe is popular, but if the people can have a glimpse on his beliefs and capacity, then maybe they will change their minds about voting him to the highest office," he said.

Guico doubted, however, if Poe would agree to debate with others on presidential aspirants because, he said, the latter would just be "embarrassed."

"If he becomes president and he (needs) to discuss (serious issues) with other presidential leaders, will he know what to say?" Guico asked.

A Poe supporter in the province said that while many visitors are asking him to run for president, nobody has volunteered to finance his candidacy.

"It is not easy running for president. You need money. Who will finance his candidacy?" the supporter said.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., who represents Pangasinan's fourth district, agreed with Guico and urged Pangasinanans to "use their heads" in 2004.

"They (Poe and Mr. Macapagal) are both from Pangasinan, but the (Presidential is part in Pangasinan. His mother (also) was born in Lingayen, grew up in Binalonan," De Venecia said.

Born in Manila

Poe, on the other hand, traces his roots to San Carlos City and the towns of Mangaldan and Binmaley. However, he was born and grew up in Metro Manila.

De Venecia said the Macapagal has given much help in the province in terms of infrastructure projects like bridges, irrigation canals and public markets, "and the streets comes whenever the province is hit by typhoons and floods."

He said he had talked to Poe about his candidacy. "I don't think he will run," De Venecia said.

Bigger OFW remittances seen this year

By Martin Misalil

DOLLAR remittances of overseas Filipino workers continued to rise this year despite the drop in the numbers of workers deployed abroad, the Department of Labor and Employment said yesterday.

The latest DOLE statistics showed that OFW remittances from January to August this year reached $8.36 billion, which is 4.7% percent higher than the $8.101 billion earned in the same period last year. In 2002, total OFW remittances amounted to $7.189 billion.

DOLE believes that Filipinos based in the United States will remain the biggest source of dollar remittances. From only $3.09 billion in 1995, total remittances by Filipinos in the US grew to $5.6452 billion last year.

Among Labor Secretary Manuel Imson said he still expects total OFW remittances this year to surpass last year's $7.189 billion.

"We are expecting our workers abroad to send (more money) to their relatives back home because of the favorable exchange rate," Imson told reporters, adding that the coming Christmas season will also be a factor.

Imson said the has become a "tradition," saying that Filipino workers tending to send more when the peso, vis-à-vis the US dollar is down.

The rise in dollar remittances in the first eight months of this year came cheaply data showing that overseas workers deployments—from January to October—dropped by 5.7 percent compared to figures last year.

But Imson yesterday told reporters that the drop in OFW deployments was "not substantial."

The Philippine Overseas Employment Administration said no less than 700,000 Filipinos were able to get foreign job contracts from January to Oct. 21 this year, compared to 752,272 in the same period last year.

Imson added that the drop in OFW deployment was noted in Middle East as well as in Europe and Asia, areas where OFWs who earn much more are deployed.

These markets, he said, were not affected by the SARS scare which spread throughout Asia.

Labor officials earlier said that the drop was caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome scare and the long wars in the early part of the year.

The Probe Team, GMA-7 end 16-year partnership

By Margaux Ortiz

THE PROBE Team will air its last episode at the end of the month after 2SEA-7, its excellent network for 16 years, decided to end their partnership, citing differences in standards.

The last Probe Team show will air on Nov. 22.

In a letter to Probe Productions president Cherlie Lucasi on Sept. 26, 2SEA president and chief executive officer Felipe Gozon said: "It appeared to us that Probe and GMA-7 have drawn shared the same standards in making accusations or conclusions of fact in their public affairs programs."

GMA-7 delayed by one week the airing of The Probe Team episode on Sept. 14 which featured a three-part docu on Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. chair Efraim Genuino for lack of supporting documents.

Old records

Gozon said GMA Network found inadequate The Probe Team's reliance on old Security and Exchange Commission records to support its accusations that Genuino did not declare some properties in his 2000 and 2002 statements of assets and liabilities (SAL).

After telling Probe the story could air the following week provided it obtained the proper documentary evidence, GMA-7 was besieged with last-minute requests for comments on the night the episode failed to air, Gozon said.

The GMA president said Probe's new manner of executing the episode at the University of the Philippines in Diliman and getting statements to the point prompted the network to respond in his prime-time newscast, 24 oras.

He said that after The Probe Team agreed to qualify its conclusion in the Genuino episode, the network allowed it to air the story the following week.

Nevertheless, Probe had already accused the network of censoring the episode, Gozon said.

"We would not have made the personal that enabled the episode to be aired the following week if our intention was to censor it," he said.

Said he said that in spite of the many years of fruitful partnership with Probe, GMA-7 felt a parting of the same area but for both organizations as both had their own integrity and longevity to protect.

Last to know

When the Inquirer talked to The Probe Team reporting/producer Albert Romasch, he said they had just received a copy of GMA-7's letter.

He said that before Lucasi left for Hong Kong on Thursday she wrote Gozon asking for confirmation of "the Probe Team's 'last day.'"

Romasch said it seemed the media were told about GMA-7's decision before Probe was.

He added that Lucasi, who returned to Manila yesterday afternoon, had yet to read Gozon's letter.

"We are not bitter but sad about what happened," Romasch said in a phone interview. "(But) we still have moments to read a good show that lasted 16 years."

Romasch said they would be preparing for The Probe Team's last episode highlighting its 16 years as television series.

Gozon said in his statement that they were not closing the door on Probe Productions and would continue to air its other programs like Ito Ba Ang Sinasabi Ninyo?, Pinoy.

He also said they were considering the Hanay Pinoy project, which is being undertaken by Probe Productions.

Gozon said they intend to air past Probe episodes in other countries, when GMA launches its international channel in the coming months.

Tilapia, not 'galunggong,' named 'food of the masses'

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SHOVE over, galunggong.

The Tilapia is the new "food of the masses," according to President Macapagal-Arroyo. It is the fish, Arroyo said, that will help the province and its surrounding communities, the President said in a speech during the 16th anniversary of the Laguna Lake Development Authority in Calamba, Laguna.

And if it's the best for poor Filipinos, then it is "my favorite" fish.

That's for LLDA (Department of Social Welfare and Development) officials. Whenever I visit, they serve me (Tilapia," said the Malacañang president, who was DSWD secretary when she was Vice President.

She said galunggong had become costlier because it was harvested from the sea, and sometimes "imported."

"We can cultivate tilapia in lakes and in fishponds," the President noted. "It is cheaper because we can control supply. It is not only fish, but it can be made to our everyday fare."

The theme of the LLDA celebration was "Beautiful Lake, Strong Republic," and centered on the devotion of the Tilapia to the eggs inside.

During the program, the President was presented samples of 12 tilapia dishes.

Ms Macapagal led in the dispersal of 20,000 tilapia fingerlings and the ceremonial placement of the LLDA buoy to signify the prohibition of fishing in the agency's 5,000-hectare fish sanctuary.

Ms Macapagal said Laguna Lake should be protected in order to secure the livelihood of the fishermen dependent on it. She said this required controlling the inflow of waste from surrounding factories and households, and the protection of nearby watershed areas.

According to the President, she makes it a point to check the condition of the lake every afternoon she takes a helicopter ride.

She said the sea (humble) that many parts of the lake have a "healthy blue" color.

Businessmen give Congress thumbs down

[illegible] stance of Congress.

According to Wilhon, 58 percent of the respondents said Congress was doing a "lousy" job; 24 percent said it was doing a "poor" job; and 16 percent said it was not doing "good enough."

"Nobody said it was doing a fair job," Wilhon said.

In a recent speaking engagement before Ateneo de Manila University students, Wilhon asked how many of them would want Congress abolished.

He said "99 percent raised their hands," and he reckoned the only one who didn't must have been a son of a congressman.

Wilhon said the impeachment of Davide, coming just a few months after the Oakwood mutiny in July, has hurt the Philippines' image so much.

"Getting foreign investments into the country has become an increasingly impossible task," he said.

Wilhon urged the congressmen to withdraw their impeachment complaint. "If the congressmen can show their commitments and those who need jobs, they should reconsider their position, drop the impeachment case and let an independent auditor settle the issue. The main issue here is whether there should be an impeachment or all."

He described the present Congress as the "worst performing" for passing fewer bills than any of the previous four Congresses.

Wilhon said Congress should get back to its main duty of passing laws for the nation and stop its frantic drive with investigations in aid of legislation.

Wilhon said that there are 12 bills that need to be passed by Congress to boost government revenues and address the fast-looming budget deficit estimated at over P200 billion this year.

"They should pass these bills and show that they can do their jobs necessary to develop this country," he said.

According to him, the priority bills pending in Congress involve the information-technology, rationalization of the discretionary funding, operationalization of the green receipts tax on banks and financial institutions, privatization and, finance troubles, creation of the National Revenue Administration, and a cap on debt service.

"Do your job and for heaven's sake, stop the impeachment case. It is doing great harm on this nation and it is not justified. Take a different tact to find out the truth," Wilhon said.

"Congressmen should at least listening more to their constituencies and the public on what they should be doing," he added.

Wilhon said that an impeachment case should only be reserved for "very serious offenses" such as the corruption charges against then President Joseph Estrada in 2000.

He also questioned the haste of certain lawmakers in filing the impeachment complaint and the control interests of the signatories.

"It is clearly politically motivated, no intellectualism. It has not been assessed intellectually. Including party lines and that makes it by sheer definition politically motivated," Wilhon said.

He said the attacks against Davide were "petty and not worthy of impeachment" as Davide recently involved representatives of the two houses of the Supreme Court and the purchase of vehicles for the justices.

He suggested that an independent, internationally respected auditor be appointed to look into only these the Judiciary Development Fund but also the Countryside Development Fund (pork barrel) of lawmakers.

"I'm sure the congressmen have properly used their funds; otherwise they wouldn't go through a process like this," Wilhon said.

Even so, Wilhon said he had a "slight reservation" over the appointment of Davide's son as vice chair of the fact-and-search committee of the Supreme Court.

"It's not illegal but it's not quite right, one has to be extremely careful especially if you're with the Supreme Court," he said.

PAMELA BAÑEO business consultant Peter Wilhon says Congress' move to impeach Davide has done little to improve its credibility

House lawyer finds Davide case too hot to handle

[illegible] Claiming that impeachment was a "purely political act," Pimentel contented yesterday the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court over issues related to the impeachment.

In separate motions filed with the Supreme Court, Pimentel reminded the 53 members of the opposition that an "wholly provided in Article 11 of the Constitution, the exclusive power to initiate impeachment proceedings is lodged with the House of Representatives and the sole power to try and decide an impeachment case is lodged with the Senate as an impeachment court."

Pimentel said the status quo order issued by the Supreme Court on Oct. 28 stopping the Senate from receiving and from acting on any Articles of Impeachment that may be transmitted to it "threatens the Senate's sole jurisdiction as another off-season pertaining to impeachment."

He then asked that he be allowed to intervene in the six consolidated cases questioning the constitutionality of the second impeachment complaint against Davide, and be allowed to argue, as a senator of the republic, during the oral arguments scheduled for tomorrow.

Like Pimentel, the House prosecutors told the Supreme Court that the tribunal had no jurisdiction over the six petitions before it seeking to stop the transmittal of the impeachment complaint to the Senate for trial.

In a memorandum submitted to the tribunal, the House is said the court had no jurisdiction over this highly political matter and that there was a moral compulsion for it not to handle the petitions because all of its justices were subject to impeachment.

"We call on the Honorable Court to exercise judicial statesmanship on the principle that whenever possible, the Court should defer to the judgment of the people, expressed legislatively, recognizing full well the perils of judicial self-abasement and pride," he said.

The manifestation was in response to the motion of the court en banc for Dr. Alvarez, Secretary Prudencio Dilleo and other proponents of the impeachment complaint against Davide to file their comment on the pending petitions not later than Nov. 3.

A congressman, who asked not to be named but was privy to the legal defense of the House, said Onglibo had found the impeachment case "too messy."

"Let's just say that we agreed with the Speaker that I would not be the best lawyer for the House," said Onglibo, who remained silent on his reasons for turning down what could have been another big job for the national limelight after serving as chief counsel of the Philippine Commission that probed the July 27 failed coup.

"I promised the Speaker I wouldn't fail her in the evaluation," he added when pressed.

Onglibo was supposed to help the House legal team composed of Representatives Raoul Manuel (Lakas, Cebu), Pantaleon Alvarez (NPC, Surigao), Rolex Suplico (LDP, Iloilo), Gilbert Teodoro (NPC, Tarlac) and Arthur Defensor (Lakas, Iloilo).

While Onglibo declining the offer, the House is tapping its in-house lawyer Leonardo Balicat III to appear in court for the chamber, Suplico said Onglibo's move "will not affect the House defense."

The House's legal preparation had been laid down at last week's multi-party caucus, which took down in the House not recognizing the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court regarding the Davide impeachment, according to Suplico.

Onglibo's decision was welcomed by a colleague in the Philippines as Bangkok-based Rafael Ilan Mercurio for the Economic Good), which is seeking accreditation as a political party before the Commission on Elections.

Onglibo is Republican's poster-boy, said the group's chair Rafaelito "Boody" Pacheco.

"I have not talked to him about it (House appointment) and he has his own reasons. But if he's really not doing it, it means he will have more time for Republican," Pacheco said.

Launched in August last year, Republican seeks stricter gun control, and the abolition of the pork barrel, the death penalty and state-operated gambling, among others.

Instability

In his motion, Pimentel said that fears of political and economic instability fostered by some quarters should not parallel the basic constitutional issue involved.

"The Senate, sitting as an impeachment court, must proceed with its mandate in trying impeachment cases without fear of another 'edsa uprising,'" said Pimentel, who, along with Davide, co-presided the aborted impeachment trial of then President Joseph Estrada in 2000.

At a press conference, Pimentel insisted that because the impeachment process was a political act it should be settled politically.

Should the Supreme Court still intervene by declaring the second impeachment complaint unconstitutional, Pimentel predicted that it could foster a "military solution, which is worse than proceeding with impeachment."

Pimentel clarified reports that the country was in a state of a constitutional crisis. "That is not correct at all because if the rule of law—if the Constitution is followed...there will be no constitutional crisis whatsoever, knowing that the House makes a mistake, the Senate as the impeachment court can correct that mistake."

And if the Senate makes a mistake, the people can sanction it, that if the Supreme Court makes a mistake by gratifying a petition that does not belong to it, who is going to correct the Supreme Court? he asked.

"That is where the constitutional crisis will arise, and therefore it is an open invitation for a military solution," he said.

The senator said that allowing the Supreme Court justices to settle the constitutional issue, instead of the impeachment court, was "in effect saying that they are the arbiters of what are constitutional matters in the impeachment process, which they are not supposed to do. Doing so would mean that the person being charged with culpable violation of the Constitution also has the authority to determine whether or not indeed there was culpable violation of the Constitution."

He believed that the House was here on not recognizing that Supreme Court decision, "so if that is true, you have the makings of a constitutional crisis."

In a separate comment, which was attached to his motion to intervene, Pimentel asked the Supreme Court to dismiss the petitions for lack of jurisdiction, and to recognize the sole power, authority and jurisdiction of the Senate as the impeachment court to try and decide impeachment cases.

He reminded the high court that it was well within its powers to avert a constitutional crisis by recognizing the authority of the impeachment court over the issues posed by the six petitions.

Act of courtesy

In his statement after signing the manifestation, De Venecia made it clear that the statement was filed with the Supreme Court as an "act of courtesy" of the House as a co-equal body under the Constitution, and should not be construed as submission of the court's jurisdiction.

He said the court could not encroach the power of judicial review in an impeachment case because the proceeding should be left solely to the jurisdiction and discretion of Congress.

"No impeachment proceeding is a political action to dispense political justice concerning controversial issue, solely reserved to the legislature by the sovereign will," De Venecia said.

According to de Venecia, the framers of the Constitution carefully and meticulously delineated powers among the three principal branches of government and installed a system of checks and balances, to prevent abuse of administration.

He said a special feature of the system was the impeachment power as the only legal means to remove high officials from office, namely the President, Vice President, Chief Justice and other members of the Supreme Court, members of the constitutional commissions, and the Ombudsman.

The Constitution specifically defined stages in the impeachment process. The filing of the complaint by [illegible] members of the House or any citizen upon a resolution of endorsement by any member thereof, initiation of the case by the House; the consideration of the Articles of Impeachment by the Senate; and trial by the Senate.

The Constitution also provides for the specific use of the term "file" in relation to the complaint of a member of the House or any citizen, and the term "initiate" in connection with the exclusive power of the house to exercise a case.

He explained that the first case of impeachment was filed by former President Joseph Estrada against Davide and seven other justices of the Supreme Court for legitimizing the presidency of President Macapagal-Arroyo, while the other was initiated by one-third of the members of the House.

The Speaker said that the Estrada complaint did not reach first base and was never initiated by the House, and that the committee report had yet to be filed and acted upon by the House.

He said petitioners erroneously considered the other complaint, which was officially initiated by one-third of House members, as the second complaint.

"This is the only rational and reasonable interpretation that can be given to the above-quoted provisions. Otherwise, this extraordinary remedy of impeachment will never be effectively availed on because impeachable officials can conveniently allow or manipulate the filing of bogus complaints against them every year to frustrate the remedy," De Venecia said. With a report from Cynthia D. Rubena

PCGG seeks re-freeze order on San Miguel shares

By Arlene M. Nicam

THE PRESIDENTIAL Commission on Good Government yesterday asked the Sandiganbayan to reimpose the status of sequestration over the 29 percent San Miguel Corp. stake being claimed by businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr., saying the anti-graft court's ruling lifting the freeze order on the contested shares was "premature."

In a 16-page motion for reconsideration filed before First Division of the Sandiganbayan, the PCGG asked the anti-graft court to clarify remedy of the disputed shares, citing the ruling of the Supreme Court in the case of Republic vs. Sandiganbayan (First Division) "to prevent the looting of the people."

"This honorable court may issue a writ of sequestration on the subject SMC shares for the purpose of preventing the destruction, concealment or dissipation of, and otherwise, conserving and preserving the same—until the honorable court makes a final declaration that the subject SMC shares were in truth ill-gotten," the PCGG said in a motion filed through the Office of the Solicitor General.

The PCGG filed the motion for reconsideration in response to the Sandiganbayan's ruling issued last Sept. 17, nullifying the writ of sequestration with that it issued over Cojuangco's 20 percent stake in the food and beverage giant.

The government earlier used the writ to get hold of Cojuangco's shares.

In its appeal, the PCGG said the anti-graft court's resolution was "premature, if not misplaced, as the determination of legitimate ownership over the disputed shares have taken precedence."

The DOJ cited the dissenting opinion of First Division Chair Associate Justice Teresita Leonardo de Castro, who said that there exists a "prima facie evidence to justify the sequestration."

Likewise, the OSG asserted that the final ruling of the high tribunal in the 1995 case of Republic vs. Sandiganbayan (First Division) where the Supreme Court declared that "there is prima facie evidence to support the sequestration of defendant corporations formed by Cojuangco."

The OSG noted the SC ruling was based on Cojuangco and the corporate defendant's "pre-trial briefs" where they admitted the disputed SMC shares were paid for with loans from the former Consort Phoenix Bank and the Consort Industry Investments Fund III Mills—at the time Cojuangco was CEO of the bank and director of the CIIF Oil Mills.

Ganzon laid to rest early to avoid trouble

ILOILO CITY—The children of former Gov. Michelle Ganzon buried their father yesterday ahead of schedule, before even President Macapagal-Arroyo could pay her last respects.

Ganzon, who died on Oct. 29 after a lingering illness, was laid to rest amid tight security in the family mausoleum at the Molo Catholic Cemetery here at about 1:30 p.m. Its watch[illegible]

The Ganzons are a house divided between the 10 children of his first marriage and their stepmother of more than 10 years.

Jeffrey, one of the children, said the decision was made after "our family" received reports that his father's second wife Rosa was not to be inclusive to stop the burial and desecrate body.

Rosa denied this, saying she wanted "honor, dignity and respect" for her husband till the end.

The President was scheduled to arrive on Nov. 5 to attend the funerals.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas said he was informed of the advanced burial only in the morning. The earlier arrangement was for the remains to lie in state to day[illegible]

In more pressing Nasa ahead of a requiem mass at Jaro Church, a billionaire from the cemetery like had a huge portrait of her husband encased near the altar.

Ganzon married Rosa in civil rites in 1995, two years after he lost his first wife, Dolores Hidalgina. In 1996, they were married in church.

Two mistresses held—one at the ancestral house, the other at Rosa's house just a stone's throw away.

Before the funeral, Governor Ganzon viewed down unto his stepmother's request for a last look at her husband. Ma. Elena Jubilo and Stefan F. Burgos, rr., PhD Regan Barrera

El Shaddai to pray for end to political crisis

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE CATHOLIC charismatic group El Shaddai yesterday stepped into the row between the Supreme Court and the House of Representatives, saying it had had enough of the political discussions and needed to do something about threats to democracy in the country.

El Shaddai, which boasts of eight million members in the country, said it would hold a people power prayer initiative at the Luneta Grandstand in Manila on Saturday and Sunday to call for [illegible] to respect the independence of the House of Representatives.

"We have lots of faith and believe that still we destroy both institutions... We need to look into the causes and talk to them, to plan possible meeting points," he said.

Velarde extended his invitation to President Macapagal-Arroyo and other leaders to attend the prayer rally and listen to the people's sentiments.

The cards Velarde has also invited Senate President Joseph Estrada to join the prayer initiative.

He said that his legal team will ask the Sandiganbayan to allow Estrada "temporary liberty" so he would attend the rally. Estrada supports Estrada's request to have surgery in the United States.

"We will ask the government to consider temporary liberty for him to be able to initiate the healing process before the campaign starts for the 2004 elections because the ex-President still has a mass following," Velarde said.

But Fr. Romeo Intengan, provincial superior of the Society of Jesus, warned El Shaddai to do everything within legal boundaries.

"There's a thin line between reconciliation and arbitrariness on this. Either should have to wait until legal aspects," said Intengan, who has also been active during the El Shaddai media briefing.

The Jesuit priest said the Catholic Church was hoping for an immediate solution to the impasse because it may give the incumbent legal opportunity for the cessation of the "ungovernability and instability" of the Philippines.

Velarde urged other religious groups to join the people power prayer initiative.

Cebu solon barraged by hate text over Davide stand

From page A1

signed the impeachment complaint.

Lawyer Rolando Mallig-on, spokesperson for Ilaw, said several persons had called up her house and office to criticize her.

One text message, however, hurt her family. She said—that she was paid P5 million by businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. Cojuangco is the founding chair of the Nacionalist People's Coalition to which Ilaw belongs, another NPC member in Cebu, Rep. Joseph Lee Dumarpa of the fifth district, is also a signatory to the impeachment complaint.

Some Cebuanos are rallying their support for Davide, with the University of the Philippines Law Alumni Cebu Foundation Inc. filing a petition for injunction asking the Supreme Court to stop the impeachment complaint.

Eleven board members of the alumni association signed the petition filed against the more than 46 House members who signed the complaint, and against Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., Senate President Franklin Drilon and the House of Representatives as a whole.

The alumni association also asked the Supreme Court to punish the congressmen for violating the tribunal's issuance last month—instead of complying with the status quo order, the petitioners said, the House, through De Venecia, made public pronouncements that it would defy the order and forward the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate.

"Such acts of the respondents in defying the honorable court's order constitute indirect contempt of this honorable court, and constitute an improper and unconscionable conduct tending to directly or indirectly impede, obstruct and degrade the administration of justice," the petition said.

The petition said that the second impeachment complaint violated the Constitution and that the House had no authority to interfere in final matters of the judiciary, specifically in the disbursement of the Judiciary Development Fund (JDF), the petitioners said.

While Congress holds the power of the purse, it may not interfere with the use of the judiciary's resources without defeating the fiscal autonomy of the judiciary, which is enshrined in the Constitution.

Representatives Ruiz and Dumarpa earlier said they signed the impeachment complaint to give Davide a venue to explain his side on the allegation that he misused the JDF.

Mallig-on said the accusations and solicitous against Ilaw were unfair. For, he said, Ilaw remained hopeful that the Cojuangco scandal eventually underscored her position.

Mallig-on asked Ilaw's supporters not to pursue their plans to stage a rally in front of the Ilaw house in Mandaue City.

It rally, he said, might threaten the legislator's young children.

SOON-RUIZ: Feeling the heat of the Cebuano fury

Shoot anybody

He did not confirm radio reports that Ruiz's husband, Lito, had warned he would shoot anybody who stepped a rally in front of their house.

Mallig-on said Ruiz ought withdraw her signature if she is presented with a new report from the Commission on Audit showing Davide.

In Mindanao, the National Democratic Front said the impeachment case was nothing but "a conspiracy against the people."

NDF spokesperson for Mindanao Jorge Madlos, alias Ka Oris, said some lawmakers had colluded to protect their dear interest and spoil the game of the people's struggle.

"The Davide impeachment plot is just part of a wider conspiracy of the ruling clique against the people. Only (the President) herself leads a secret deal for Eduardo Cojuangco to regain control of San Miguel Corp. at the expense of the people's fight to recover ill-gotten wealth, in exchange for Cojuangco's withdrawal from the presidential race," Madlos said.

He also warned the Supreme Court for its "long tradition of defending the interest of the ruling class" and for "its role in the current political situation when it "made decisions favorable to the people taken condemned by strong people's protest." With a report from Aquiles Z. Zonio, Phil Mindanao Bureau

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, November 4, 2003
31st Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Rom 12:5-16
Gospel: Lk 14:15-24

One of the guests at a party said to Jesus, "Happy are those who eat at the banquet in the kingdom of God!"

Jesus replied, "A man once gave a feast and invited many guests. When it was time for the feast he sent his servant to tell those he had invited to come, for everything was ready. But all alike began, to make excuses. The first said: 'I have bought a piece of land and must go and see it. Please excuse me.' Another said: 'I have bought five yoke of oxen and am on my way to try out the first yoke of oxen. Please excuse me.' Still another said: 'I have just married a wife, and therefore cannot come.'

"The servant returned and reported this to his master. Then furious, the master of the house said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

"The servant reported after a while: 'Sir, your orders have been carried out, but there is still room.' The master said, 'Go out to the highways and hedgerows and force anyone you find there to come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, none of those invited will have a second of my feast.'"

Commentary:

"Let there be dinners. *Man is well and holds to whatever is good.*" *September 11, 2003 will always be remembered in the United States and the rest of the world. Four commercial planes were hijacked, two crashed in the World Trade Center Twin Towers, one was crashed at the Pentagon and the fourth plane crashed at a farm site in Pennsylvania. An estimate got of the casualties has many fear that it will be into several thousands. Some scientists fear that Iraq's feud to global recession and lead to much suffering to many third world countries. The general reaction to one of great sadness but also of quiet anger against the terrorists. Many are calling for revenge, to strike down forever terrorist groups and nations providing safe haven to these groups. But someone said that we should be careful that revenge is the same breed as the terrorists. There is a higher moral ground we should preserve: love what is evil and hold fast to what is good. Terrorism is evil and we should hate it, but we should hold fast to what is good. Revenge is never a good choice, but justice is good and justice we must uphold.*

AFP, Malaysia hope 5 hostages alive

From page A1

said.

Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, chief of the Southern Command, said Zamboanga representative of Malaysian envoy Arcasili indicated that his fellow hostages—his parents, a Filipino woman and two Indonesian men—were still alive. Transmit to a speedboat seized the six hostages from the Borneo Paradise Resort on Oct. 3.

Earlier statement

Arcasili, 39, earlier claimed that Abu Sayyaf bandits shot and killed his fellow hostages in the afternoon of Dec. 27 on Langyasan Island, about five hours by boat from the Tawi-Tawi capital of Bongao, after the Malaysian government and the tourist owner refused to pay the ransom demand of 5 million ringgit (US$1.3 million).

Arcasili said only he managed to run away when the shooting began. He was later found by villagers clad only in his underwear and turned over to authorities.

"We has reiterated all his earlier statements)... Now I am optimistic that the Sabah hostages are still alive," Kyamko told the Inquirer.

He said Arcasili's earlier statements were being "double-checked" by troops in the field.

"Earlier, he (Arcasili) claimed the cadaver were left at Pangdiwa Sagala when the supposed executions, but after a week's intensified search, our troops didn't see any indication of massacre or execution," the Southcom chief added.

Motives unclear

It wasn't clear what Arcasili's motives were when he made those supposedly misleading statements.

Whatever, Kyamko said he had sent more Marines and soldiers to Tawi-Tawi to pan the search for the five hostages.

In Camp Aguinaldo, a top Armed Forces official also said that the five people snatched from a Malaysian resort were still alive and that efforts to find them were continuing.

"Since we did not find any bodies, it would mean that the five would still be somewhere there," AFP Vice-Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ruben Ig Garcia said. "That is what we are now focusing our efforts on."

Not exactly true

Garcia said in a television interview that Arcasili had admitted that his earlier statements were "not exactly true."

Malaysian Defense Minister Najib Razak also questioned Arcasili's account.

"We are relying on information from the Philippine military as far the reports received are vague and unclear," Najib was quoted as saying by the Bernama national news agency.

"As long as there are no bodies, we cannot conclude that they have died and we hope the Philippine military would do something to rescue them," he was quoted as saying.

Malaysia earlier refused to acknowledge that the hostages may be in the Philippines. Fearing damage to its tourism industry, Malaysia has also played down the possibility that Abu Sayyaf bandits had carried out the abductions.

Photo of Andang

The Abu Sayyaf, which has been linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida, launched boat raids on Malaysian resorts twice in 2000, kidnapping foreign tourists and collecting huge ransoms.

After he was turned over to authorities last week, Arcasili was shown photos of Abu Sabaya. He identified the leader of the kidnappers as Galib Andang, alias Commander Robot, head of a Sulu-based Abu Sayyaf faction.

When Arcasili was brought to the Southern Command headquarters in Zamboanga City for further interrogation, however, he retracted his previous claims.

Kyamko said Arcasili "denied that the kidnapping was perpetrated by the Abu Sayyaf."

"And when he reviewed the pictures, he did not recognize even one of the Abu Sayyaf member's there," the Southcom chief added.

TJMD report is from AP

THE NEXT of Hamanay and Mahnay: Indonesian Nenna Arkasili recalls story on massacre of hostages from Sabah allegedly by their captors. AFP/JTG

NPC threatens De Venecia

Front page A1

transpired in the House, adding that less dramatic measures to press the Speaker were already being implemented.

He said pro-impeachment congressmen would be concentrating on Ronnel De Venecia's move seeking Lakas members to withdraw their signatures from the complaint.

Puentevella said his group was confident its pressure campaign to push through with the impeachment would succeed. "There was a division taken by a multi-party caucus to transmit the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate on Nov. 10 in an effort to end the decision stands."

But presidential adviser Hubert Alvarez claimed the impeachment drive was already losing steam after 12 congressmen reportedly decided to withdraw their signatures within the week.

He declined to name all of them, but said Rep. Lorenzo Tañada gibbs Bataraj of Agusan del Norte, of LDP-NPC, is having withdrawn his signature yesterday.

Five-point formula

Arnaiz said he had discussed his five-point formula with all parties concerned.

"I've gotten positive responses," he noted.

Arnaiz's proposal involves the following:

■ For Davide to have his son Bryan resign as vice chair of the Supreme Court's bid and award committee and chair of the Committee on the Bills of Justice.

■ For Davide to open the Judiciary Development Fund Accounts to the Commission on Audit for the exercise of its constitutional oversight powers."

■ For Congress to "suspend transmittal of the Articles of Impeachment against Davide to the Senate, and task the House committees on justice to continue its review of the JDF."

■ For SC justices, "being unimpeachable officials themselves, [to] observe the moral compunction not to assume jurisdiction over the highly political matter of impeachment, and leave the issue to the Senate when it convenes as an impeachment court."

■ For President Macapagal Arroyo to "exercise her moral ascendancy as the highest official of the land, to call the Supreme Court and Congress, and lead both to their principled solutions" of the crisis.

On Bryan Davide's resignation, Arnaiz said that "gesture will be taken in good faith and humility, and will not be admissible of any wrongdoing."

Members welcomed the Arnaiz proposal as worth considering. "Well-taken. We should explore this. We should not be oversensitized by legalities."

Abad, who is the president of the Liberal Party, said he welcomed the use of the phrase "principled solution" instead of "settlement."

"Settlement connotes compromise and concession," Abad said.

He noted his concerns over the way Jamela phrased his five-point formula. He said the Bryan Davide resignation "will have to be a personal decision of the Chief Justice."

Abad agreed with Arnaiz that the Senate committee on justice should resume its probe into the JDF, but he disagreed that the Senate shall suspend the transmittal of the Articles of Impeachment.

Abad said the "most expeditious way" was for congressmen to withdraw their signatures.

On the proposal for the high court to keep off the impeachment controversy, Abad said that the tribunal may be accused of "abdication of duty if it did not deal with the six petitions pending before it.

Two-point formula

Another research anti-impeachment adviser, Bonifacio Ilagan, had a counter-proposal to the Arnaiz's five-point. "Beautiful," she said.

Ilagan said the formula could be reduced to two basic approaches, which is for the House to suspend transmittal of the Articles of Impeachment, and for the Senate to exercise its oversight functions over the JDF.

"We must suspend the transmittal of an incumbent and unconstitutional impeachment complaint that has violated, more than once, the prohibition, the members of the House are in relevance, validity and propriety," Ilagan said.

"In the meantime, let us exercise our oversight functions and await the final report of the [House] committee on justice on the JDF within the parameters and limitations provided by the Constitution," she added.

Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) had a similar two-point formula for Davide to recognize the oversight power of Congress to review JDF disbursements, and for the House to withdraw the impeachment complaint and resume the JDF review in the committee level.

"Let's be less legal," Nograles said. "There's no need for every step to fight it out in court."

Asked for comment on the Arnaiz formula, Nograles said: "Anything that will be acceptable to the parties without one losing face is a step forward."

Nograles, who did not sign the impeachment complaint against Davide, said: "We need more leadership and less confrontation and let us be prepared to make personal sacrifices to avert a constitutional crisis."

Main issue

Puentevella said the impeachment case had become so politically charged that it has obscured the more important issue, which is alleged graft and corruption.

Puentevella said Lakas congressmen were being made to close their eyes to the issue of alleged misspending of the JDF.

"All we want a full disclosure and transparency of the JDF to maintain the integrity of the judiciary and the highest tribunal," Puentevella said.

The three Bohol representatives who signed the impeachment complaint vowed not to withdraw their signatures.

Rep. Rodolfo Alfiler Jr., a member of Lakas, said he would not allow "night crawlers" in Lakas-dominated cabinet committee to pressure congressmen to withdraw their signatures, to approach him.

Two other Isabela representatives who signed the impeachment complaint vowed not to withdraw their signatures.

Rep. Rodolfo Albano Jr., a member of Lakas, said he would not allow "night crawlers" in Lakas-dominated cabinet committee to pressure congressmen to withdraw their signatures, to approach him.

Two other Isabela representatives, Reps. Faustino Dy III and Joseph Aggabao, both members of the Nationalist People's Coalition, said they would stick to their decision to endorse the complaint.

Dy said he signed the complaint because he believed that it had merit. Aggabao, a lawyer, said he would turn Lakas crisis somersaults.

Rep. Edcelo Lis, the only Isabela representative who did not sign the impeachment complaint, assailed his colleagues for pushing a case "lacking in substance and technically insufficient."

"That complaint is unconstitutional. The law provides that there should be no second impeachment complaint. Besides, there are no impeachable offenses to tie the complaint against Chief Justice," Ty, also a lawyer, said.

In Davao Sur, Rep. Ivan Singson, president of the 29-member Northern Luzon Alliance, said his group had no common position on the impeachment complaint.

"We are on our own on this issue," said Singson, who signed the complaint.

Singson, a member of the Liberal Party, said no amount of coercion could make him withdraw his signature because he signed it according to his conscience.

Palace hopes

But Malacañang officials expressed the hope that more congressmen would withdraw their signatures from the impeachment complaint, and said the President has taken "some concrete steps" to avert a constitutional crisis.

Flip-flopping between her earlier avowal and "middle lane" postures, Ms Macapagal reasoned she said a political threshold had been crossed, forcing her to intervene.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Ms Macapagal has taken "concrete steps" to end the impasse and she is optimistic that this solution would happen very soon.

"The President was very upbeat this morning," Bunye said, saying her optimism on the resolution of the crisis was "8 on a scale of 1 to 10."

The President herself addressed the issue, in a speech at the 106th anniversary of the Philippine Postal Authority.

"I have prayed very hard about the impeachment controversy and I have consulted deeply with leaders from the great institutions and various sectors," she said.

"There is a growing consensus that we have crossed a political threshold to the point where the President must step in and forge a principled solution to the impasse," she said.

Leading the campaign to pressure congressmen into withdrawing their signatures is divisive claimed that the proponents of impeachment, particularly those from the NPC, no longer had the numbers to move for its transmittal to the Senate.

"With 12 Lakas congressmen now withdrawing their signatures, the impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide is effectively defeated," Alvarez said.

Alvarez said the campaign to withdraw signatures was leading to withdrawals by his group with the consent of the party leadership.

He said that Ms Macapagal, who is also the Lakas chair, had already made public her sympathy for Davide.

"I am moving with the consent of party leaders because we believe that there was no basis to charge Davide."

Other Lakas congressmen put the blame on Cabinet Claudio, the presidential legislative liaison officer, for failing to ensure the signatures necessary of pro-impeachment congressmen.

They vented that the "house-to-house" campaign by the proponents of the second impeachment complaint came shortly after the latter's issue of US President George W. Bush.

"In fact, many heard an angry Rep. Joe Barbers and his group putting the blame on Claudio directly after the 75 signatures were measured by the SDC led by Representatives Gilbert Teodoro and Wilfrido Fuentebella," new congressmen noted. Both reports from Cynthia Balana, Julie Aurelio, Hilarion Pisan Jr. and Jeannie Bubbie Jr., BM Northern Luzon Bureau; Marilou Ramos, PBI Southern Luzon Bureau

OSG: Impeachment rap vs Davide illegal

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE OFFICE of the Solicitor General yesterday said that the impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. was unconstitutional.

It maintained that the Supreme Court had the power to review the constitutionality of the acts of Congress, including the power to order the House of Representatives to drop the impeachment complaint against Davide. The House, however, insisted that the SC had no jurisdiction over Davide's impeachment.

The 1987 and the House filed with the tribunal yesterday their comments after several groups, including congressmen, questioned the constitutionality of the second impeachment complaint against Davide.

In his 31-page comment, Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo said the constitutional ban on Chief Justice violated the constitutional prohibition against the initiation of impeachment proceedings against an impeachable official within a one-year period.

He said that the prospect of a full-blown constitutional crisis should not deter the tribunal from ruling on the matter.

"That a constitutional crisis may occur is not a reason for this Honorable Court to refrain from upholding the Constitution in all impeachment cases. The function of this Honorable Court cannot abandon their constitutional duties because their action may not, if not precipitate, a crisis," Benipayo said.

He said that the House "apparently" violated this constitutional provision when it changed its rules on impeachment. The new rules say that an impeachment complaint is considered initiated only after the House committee on justice acts on it.

Proponents of Davide's impeachment claim that under their new rules, the first impeachment filed by Senator Pimentel on June 2 was barred as it was never because the committee on justice voted it down.

"The long and short of it is that the complainants in the second impeachment complaint do not have the impeachment complaint as no 'initiated' complaint on the ground that the [House] committee on justice had found the complaint to be insufficient in substance. This argument is sophistry," Benipayo said.

"This law is clear. An action is initiated by the filing of a complaint in the proper tribunal. In the cases at bar, the first impeachment complaint was filed in the [House], in the same manner as the second impeachment complaint," he said.

Benipayo reviewed the records of the 1986 Constitutional Commission, which, he said, "clearly" showed that an impeachment complaint was deemed to be initiated once it was filed in Congress.

"The transgressors who signed the conspiracy cannot find solace in the power of Congress 'to promulgate its rules of impeachment to effectively carry out the purpose' of the constitutional provision on impeachment. Where the constitution is clear, it is the duty of this Honorable Court to uphold and allow persons other than members of the House of Representatives, the question because judicial in nature," Benipayo said.

"The courts at bar invoke the right of a third party—the Chief Justice—without plus for legitimate reasons was rejected by the House. What is more, these same invoke an infringement of a specific constitutional limitation," he said.

GMA asks for divine ...

Front page A1

Congress resumes sessions and the House takes up the issue of whether to transmit the impeachment complaint filed against Davide to the Senate.

In wise prayer, the President invoked: "God our Nation will be glorified right now from today unless Congress removes its verdict."

After initially distancing herself from the Davide impeachment controversy, Ms Macapagal has since stepped into the fray. She has backed Speaker Jose de Venecia's strategy of securing fellow Lakas-CMD members to withdraw their signatures from the impeachment complaint.

Explaining the President's recourse to prayer, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Ms Macapagal was basically a "call-

Front page A1

to please refrain from spreading this information because this information has no basis and they are just doing a disservice to the Filipino nation because this is creating undue alarm to the public," he said.

A senior military official said rumors about purported movements of some troops on the ground were part of black propaganda, but could not say which group was behind this.

"There's not reason for anybody to move; we have been implementing reforms in the military and everybody knows that," the official, who asked not to be named, said in a phone interview.

For good measure, the military top brass also disallowed movements by any unit unless approved by the command top officers.

"The AFP has issued a directive to the field to refrain from making unnecessary movements to prevent doubts. So all movements have to be official," Lucero said.

During the alert period, troops would not be allowed to take leaves of absence and would be on call at their camps.

Lucero assured the public that no soldier "will join any destabilization moves."

He added: "The [military] will be one, unbiased, we will strictly adhere to the chain of command."

PMA 1989

Meanwhile, members of Philippine Military Academy Class of 1989 came out in the open to deny reports that they had been offered a large sum to take over the civilian-led junta.

"We unanimously deny any involvement in any coup attempt, more on the changing of hands of any money for the launching of destabilization acts against the present administration," said Capt. Oliver Sorrenes, president of PMA Class of 1989.

"We continue to be professional officers and our principles are not for sale. Being apolitical, we cannot be bought by any reward or promises to that effect," he added, reading from a prepared statement.

Sorrenes, who with three other members of the class showed up at the press office in Camp Aguinaldo, maintained that they would never join any act of military adventurism.

"We abide by the Constitution; we will not get involved in any adventurism," he said.

Sorrenes admitted that his class has been holding monthly meetings and fellowships in Bataan plans for their celebrating of the PMA foundation day circa to February next year.

"We never touched on the Davide impeachment issue," he said. —With a report from AFP

AFP puts troops on nationwide alert

Front page A1

head of the directorate for operations, later explained that the training was part of the PNP's "standard operating procedures in case of any contingency."

"If you're natured, there have been most actions because of the Davide issue," said Director Rolando de Leon, PNP spokesperson and chief of the directorial staff. "We should be ready to maintain peace and order at all times."

PNP Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. said he and his men had not mentioned any police or military activity to destabilize the government.

Director Jose Lalimo Jr., chief of the PNP directorate for personnel records management, assured the public that no uprising would come from police ranks because the "legitimate grievances of our personnel are being properly addressed."

The military has received information that some groups would stage a series of rallies starting tomorrow, but it has not established if these groups include an armed component.

"So far we haven't monitored any armed group, if you are referring to your operations any member of the AFP for can assure the public that no member of the AFP will join any destabilization move if there are," Lucero said.

Just rumors

Lucero stressed that rumors about "unusual troop movement" and recruitment of military personnel for a destabilization attempts remained just that—rumors.

"We would like to request those groups that are spreading these rumors

POLICEMEN undergo training in close range combat at Camp Crame. They were part of some 400 policemen from different police units who arrived at the PNP headquarters yesterday. (Inquirer)

The WORLD

Libre Lorraine B. Garcia

US mourns deaths but will not retreat

WASHINGTON—The United States, faced with its heaviest losses in Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in April, vowed Sunday it would not back down in the war on "terrorists."

Officials said the downing of a US military helicopter and the deaths of two civilian contractors would not shake US resolve to win, while also noting the difficulty of stabilizing Iraq, as long as Saddam remains at large.

"The terrorists want to kill coalition forces and innocent Iraqis because they want us to run, but we will and resolve are unshakeable," White House spokesperson Dana Dutly said.

"We will prevail in this critical front in the war on terror because the stakes are too high to do anything less."

Duffy said President George W. Bush, vacationing at his Texas ranch, was informed of the downed helicopter by staff but had no public statement.

Fifteen soldiers were killed and 21 wounded when a US army helicopter was shot down near Fallujah, 64 km west of Baghdad airport, military officials said. US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said the helicopter, a CH-47 Chinook, likely was brought down by a shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missile.

It was the bloodiest attack on US troops in Iraq since the April 9 fall of Saddam's fourth party regime at the hands of the US-led military machine.

Another US soldier was killed in a separate bombing in Baghdad, and two US contractors working with the US Army Corps of Engineers have been killed by a roadside bomb in Fallujah, a stronghold of resistance to the US-led occupation.

If confirmed, Sunday's deaths would raise to 148 the number of US soldiers killed in combat since May 1, when Washington declared major combat over, according to an AFP count based on a previous toll provided by the Pentagon.

US officials downplayed the impact of the helicopter attack, which comes after a dramatic surge of anti-coalition violence in the past week, including the Oct. 27 car bombing at the International Committee of the Red Cross and other nearly simultaneous attacks around Baghdad that killed 41 people and wounded more than 200.

"In a long, hard war, we're going to have tragic days, as this is. But they're necessary. They're part of a war that's difficult and complicated," Rumsfeld told ABC News.

"We can win this war, we will win this war."

RUMSFELD: "We can win this war, we will win this war." REUTERS

Rumsfeld said the United States had no proof Saddam was masterminding the attacks. US officials also suspect some 100,000 ex-Iraqi soldiers released from jail before his capture and fighters from other countries, notably Syria and Lebanon. AFP

Chopper attack signals long haul in Iraq

By Charles J. Hanley

WASHINGTON—"As we fight this low-intensity conflict," the American general said, "there will be... more tragedies in the future." Sears Isaac, in the flush of a post-Gulf War suicide, the general had his latest tragedy and the intensity of this American conflict moved up a notch.

The big, lumbering Chinook helicopter that crashed in flames Sunday in the Euphrates River valley country west of Baghdad took with it not just the lives of 15 US soldiers, but also any hope that the war in Iraq would end anytime soon.

After six months, the anti-US resistance is smarter, more adroit, more effective. The insurgents have gained new confidence, learning from their own experience and from other Iraqis who have fought US occupiers before them.

In little more than a week, in an area stretching through the guerrilla belt from north of Baghdad to the west, the insurgents have annoyed the US occupation army with no less than nine attacks.

On Oct. 25, they brought down a helicopter for the first time in Iraq outside a Black Hawk of the 4th Infantry Division killed by ground fire at Tikrit, hometown of the fugitive ex-president Saddam Hussein.

As anyone the next day, they battered the occupation's headquarters hotel in Baghdad with a volley of rockets—fired precisely from his doorstep—leaving one hundreds of US staff members.

Two days later, an Abrams tank—a 63.5-metric ton symbol of US Army might...was destroyed by the first time during the six-month old occupation, blown off the road south of Baghdad by an insurgent land mine or makeshift bomb.

On Sunday a guerilla gunner—apparently armed with a shoulder-fired, heat-seeking missile and positioned in a date-palm grove—shot the Chinook out the skies, the biggest US military target yet.

The insurgency is taxes not just to the targets, but in the numbers.

The average number of attacks, around 12 a day in midsummer, reached 33 a day by late October in seven weeks of war in March and April, 114 Americans were killed in combat. But over more—some 140 US military personnel—have been killed in action since President George W. Bush declared "major combat" ended on May 1.

In Washington, US Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has begun talking of a "long, hard slog" ahead. The rhetoric among the American leadership in Baghdad is hardening, too, as they try to steel the resolve of their Iraqi and coalition allies, of the American public, of the American soldier.

"They believe they can drain the coalition of its will by inflicting a steady stream of casualties. They are wrong," the US occupation chief, L. Paul Bremer, declared at a Baghdad news conference Saturday evening.

At the same session, the overall US commander in Iraq, Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, marshaled such words as "difficulty," "sacrifice" and "perseverance" as he spoke of the road ahead.

"Undoubtedly, as we continue to fight this low-intensity conflict, there will be more obstacles, more setbacks, and more tragedies in the future," Sanchez said Saturday.

The very next day was deadlier for US forces than any but one since the fighting in Iraq began.

As they move ahead, Sanchez's aides say, their main targets need is for intelligence, better, quicker information from cooperative Iraqis about who is organizing the attacks, and where and when.

Right now, Sanchez acknowledged, "I can't give you an answer."

Increasingly, as well, the Baghdad command is pushing to dull the sorely harsh into Iraqi themselves: police, paramilitary and defense, urban security guards. Bremer said Saturday he would accelerate their training and deployment. AP

Victim of attack heading home for mother's funeral

PETTSBURGH—One of five soldiers killed in the helicopter attack in Iraq was on his way home to attend the funeral of his mother, who died suddenly last week, relatives said.

Ernest Beckles, 33, was heading home on emergency leave Sunday when the military helicopter carrying him and dozens others was struck by a missile and crashed.

Beckles was on mission in Pennsylvania for the funeral of his mother, Mary Ellen Beckles, who died while driving home from work Friday when an aneurysm in an artery leading to her heart burst, said the soldier's uncle, Jack Smith.

"Two deaths in three days is hard. I'm scared to death for my brother-in-law," Smith said.

Ernest Beckles, the son of a coal miner, joined the Army about five years ago and was stationed in Colorado, Smith said.

"His mother and dad passed away—right dad he would come home early," Smith said.

He is survived by his wife, Barbara, and two sons. AP

Abdullah vows crackdown on corruption, terrorism

KUALA LUMPUR—In an emotional maiden address to parliament Monday, Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi pledged to crack down on government corruption and abuse of power.

ABDULLAH

While hailing his predecessor Mahathir Mohamad as a "hero," Abdullah took aim at two issues he said Mahathir's administration had been strongly criticized—cronyism, capitalism and the weakening of judicial and legislative independence.

"The public sector shoulders the responsibility of ensuring successful policies are implemented effectively and must reflect a clean and incorruptible image," he said.

"Our resolve to have a civil service that is corruption-free should not be weakened by unhealthy practices in the private sector or by parties outside the government that contribute to this disease."

He "checks and balances needed to prevent abuses of power," Abdullah said. "The practice of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy will continue to be supported and we must respect the separation of powers within the legislature, the executive and the judiciary."

The new premier broke into tears at the end of his address as he reflected on Allah for guidance and inspiration. He took over Friday from Mahathir, who was also known to weep at emotional moments during his 22 years in power.

Abdullah pledged to uphold democracy, but said there were limits to freedom.

"We believe democracy is the best system of government. We must be open and ready to accept criticism and contrary views to ensure that a culture of democracy flowers."

However, he said, "democracy does not mean absolute freedom, hence that inflame religious, racial, and cultural sentiments should not be accommodated while attempts to undermine national security must be dealt with firmly.

"We cannot compromise when dealing with the threats posed by extremism, terrorism, and militancy."

Malaysia has detained without trial more than 80 alleged Islamic militants in the past two years, many of them accused of association with the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist group blamed for a series of deadly bomb attacks in the region.

Abdullah's opposite number on immediate, if cautious, welcome from the Chinese-based opposition Democratic Action Party.

"There are things that we have heard before but the significance here is that he is saying all this in his first speech in parliament," secretary-general Nick Xiang Rock said.

"It is a very good start. I don't want to prejudge him but I do believe that there is interest on his part to at least oppose on fronts to past grievances which people have been making."

Rock said the question was whether Abdullah had the political strength to carry through his promises, but added: "I believe there will be some differences, but showing more respect for parliament as opposed and not just a rubber stamp."

The hardline Islamic Party, however, dismissed Abdullah's speech as "just rhetoric."

"His speech is a repeat of Mahathir's address 22 years ago when he then became the prime minister," said Abdilla Omar, a PAS member of parliament. AFP

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Gay bishop consecrated amid threats of schism

DURHAM, N.H. — The Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson was consecrated on Sunday as the first openly gay bishop of the U.S. Episcopal Church, a move condemned as "heresy" by conservative opponents who said it would tear apart the worldwide Anglican community.

The Most Rev. Frank Griswold, presiding bishop of the U.S. Episcopal Church, consecrated Robinson amid cheers and applause from the estimated 3,000 people who gathered under tight security for the ceremony in a college sports arena.

Robinson, his voice trembling, told the congregation he felt deeply honored but also urged compassion toward church members angered and upset by his consecration.

"Our God will be moved if we are hospitable and loving and caring toward them," said the new bishop, wearing a robe of gold, red and green. "If they must leave, they will always be welcomed back into our fellowship."

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, spiritual leader of the worldwide Anglican faith, said divisions arising from the appointment were "a matter of deep regret."

The conservative American Anglican Council condemned the consecration of an openly homosexual bishop as "heresy, blasphemy and sin," and vowed to create a new "mainstream" Anglican church in the United States.

"Today is a grievous day in the history of our Church.

Bishop has been held up as holy. Blasphemy has been rechristened as blessing," the American Anglican Council said in a statement. "Holy scripture has been abandoned and its celebrated core sacred doctrine."

"Our family is now split and the whole flock of the Anglican Communion is torn. Forgiveness has begun," added the council, an alliance of bishops, clergy and 500 Episcopal churches committed to "preserving Biblical orthodoxy."

Robinson, who has lived with his male partner for 13 years, has pleaded for unity that his installation may split the 73-million-member Anglican Communion.

The church's Lambeth Conference of 1998 held that the Anglican communion regards homosexual practice as "incompatible with scripture" and condemned the blessing of same-sex unions.

Jeffrey, in a statement, but remains filled protest before the consecration, opponents formally voiced their objection to installing an openly gay man as bishop.

Griswold interrupted one cleric, the Rev. Paula Eve of Pittsburgh, as he launched into a graphic description of homosexual acts. Another woman said that consecrating Robinson would tear at the fabric of the worldwide church.

"In great forward with this consecration will be to turn our back on Almighty God," she said. "The vast majority of Anglicans worldwide have told us not to take this step."

The opponents walked out after making their statements.

Moments later, Griswold asked Chris consecrating Robinson, a 56-year-old divorced father, should be ordained a bishop.

"Then to our call?" the congregation chanted loudly. Reuters

EPISCOPAL Bishop Gene Robinson wipes away tears after being consecrated as the first openly gay bishop, in the Episcopal Church in Durham, New Hampshire, Nov. 2. AP/WIRE

California wildfires quelled

SAN BERNARDINO, California — Thousands of exhausted evacuees returned to what was left of their homes Sunday as firefighters quelled the deadly wildfires that have ravaged southern California for 13 days.

But an cool weather, rain and even snow helped slow the fires' murderous advance, the new dangers of landslides, flash floods and monster rockslides loomed in their wake, officials warned.

"We have definitely turned the corner and are getting a handle on these fires," said Orville Gilchrist of the firefighters' southern command center. "If the weather remains cooperative, we expect to have most of them contained by midweek.

"But the biggest and best news that we have had for ages is that a lot of residents are now returning to their homes as we lift mandatory evacuation orders in a lot of different areas."

Thousands of residents of the San Bernardino mountains, about 60 km east of Los Angeles, returned home Oasis the refugee centers where they have been holed up for days. AFP

WORLD BRIEFS

White House bows to Senate

WASHINGTON — The White House has agreed to provide a Senate committee with other documents and other views requested as part of its investigation into the intelligence used to make the case for going to war in Iraq, Sen. Pat Roberts said Sunday. Senators had issued a deadline of noon today for the documents to be handed over, after the White House had questioned whether some of the documents could be withheld under the president's executive privilege, said Roberts, chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Among the questions under investigation by the committee is "an explanation of the various disconnects and inconsistencies in the assessments concerning the Niger uranium issue which you and the Central Intelligence Agency communicated to policy makers in both intelligence products and congressional," according to the letter. AP

Gibraltar border closed

GIBRALTAR — Spain shut its border with the tiny British colony of Gibraltar on Monday for the first time in two decades because a cruise ship carrying tourists with a viral infection was due to dock there. But Gibraltar government said. The cruise ship Aurora, loaded with hundreds of British tourists who have suffered from the 24-hour infection, arrived in Gibraltar's harbor on Monday morning. The move is — effectively cut Gibraltar off the colony from the European mainland — is the first time the border between Spain and Gibraltar has been closed since it was fully reopened in 1985. Spanish dictator Gen. Francisco Franco shut the frontier in 1969 as part of Spain's long-running dispute with Britain over sovereignty over Gibraltar, a strategically located rocky outcrop at the mouth of the Mediterranean. AP/REUTERS

TV as sex educator

LOS ANGELES — Teenagers can get sex education as well as laughs by watching TV series such as "Friends," a new study found. Watching or discussing a show with an adult reinforces or clarifies the messages carried by television, according to the study released Monday by Santa Monica-based Rand Corp., a nonprofit research group. "We've always known that teenagers get useful information about sex from factual reporting and advice-oriented media, but now we know they can get this information from entertainment television programs as well," said Rebecca Collins, lead author of the report. "That's important because entertainment programs, especially highly rated ones like 'Friends,' reach many more teens." Collins said in a Rand statement. AP

Ceasefire in Burundi

BUJUMBURA — Burundian President Domitien Ndayizeye announced Sunday from South Africa and said the government and rebel group had agreed to shut to "cessation of hostilities" effect within a week. The cease-fire is aimed at ending a civil war that claimed more than 300,000 lives after fighting broke out in 1993 between rebels of Burundi's Hutu majority and the army-dominated minority Tutsis. "According to the timetable we have agreed, we recommend that in seven days or the latest there should be a permanent ceasefire between the two warring parties," Ndayizeye said. AP

Long flights risk DVT

LONDON — Long haul air travel does increase the chance of a person suffering from deadly deep vein thrombosis (DVT) but the risk of dying as a result remains 100 times greater, according to an international study released on Monday. The study, conducted by the Australian Department of Health and Aging, found there was a small but heightened risk of developing DVT — or so-called "economy class syndrome" — in the two weeks after a long-distance flight. DVT involves the formation of blood clots, potentially up to 30 cm in length, which can cause death if they travel to the lungs or brain. "The report showed that normally healthy people were at very low risk of DVT after long-haul flights while passengers with conditions such as cardiovascular disease, obesity, cancer or who are pregnant, would be at slightly greater risk," Australia's chief medical officer, John Horvath, said in a statement. Reuters

REAL ESTATE

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Editor: Cesar D. Hangarang

Lawmakers urged to prioritize housing

By Charlen T. Bolaos

THE DEPARTMENT of Interior and Local Government, the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association and various local government units (LGUs) support the move to make housing a priority in the National Land Use bill at present pending before Congress.

In a resolution signed during the HOPE Shelter Conference held recently at the Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong, the participants said the proposed bill should also consider the urgent housing needs of the country.

"Different sectors must come together and help our lawmakers come up with a law that strikes balance between land use for people's shelter and support infrastructure and the preservation of the environment and natural resources," said SHDA National president Manlio Silverio, one of those who signed the resolution.

Government and private sector estimates show the country's housing backlog stands at 4 million. This means the country would need around 700,000 units a year for the next 20 years to meet a projected growth rate of 2.4 percent a year.

National land use policy

Pending before the 12th Congress, the National Land Use bill seeks to provide a national land use policy and planning network and their implementing mechanisms.

One of the bill's features is the National Land Use and Planning Framework that would define the limitations and priorities for land use and allocation.

Hailed in 1997, the National Land Use law seeks to address growing concerns on the impact of rapid expansion of urban centers, shopping malls, golf courses, industrial sites and resource subdivisions.

Collective action

The conference was convened to serve as a venue for the LGUs, the national government agencies and the private sector to identify and discuss prevailing issues and concerns on housing.

"[The government] needs the LGUs, the private sector and the developers to host events and do their share to fast-tracking the approval and implementation of housing projects and to answering the housing needs of the people," said Interior Secretary Ana Liza Jr.

Lim reiterated that the DILG has already issued several memorandum circulars including prescribing time standards in the issuance of development permits for housing, implementing guidelines of Executive Order 46, and prescribing time periods of issuance of housing-related certificates, clearances and permits, and imposing sanctions for failure to observe the same.

Aiding developers

"These DILG memorandums were intended to aid developers in realizing their required number of housing units built and we intend to make this clear to the LGUs why we need their cooperation," explained DILG chair Jesse Robredo.

With the resolution, all LGUs concerned agreed to dispose of and act upon applications for development permits within 30 days as prescribed in EO 45.

"Although this was already in EO 45, chiefs still accept in the local government level so there still exist resolutions, which through this conference we hope to address," said Alfeche.

Accepting bonds

Included in the resolution, the LGUs also agreed to accept Socialized Housing bonds from developers as compliance to the 20 percent Socialized Housing requirement of RA 7279 (Urban Development and Housing Act).

The DILG will also offer incentives to developers and realtors likes to develop and invest their projects in their respective localities through fiscal and other modes of incentives (fee exemptions, tax credits, special windows to fast-track approvals of permits, consolidated housing credits, among others).

PLACE OF CONVERGENCE

Verdana Village Center attracts traders

ENTREPRENEURS setting up community-based businesses find Cavite's new commercial development, the Verdana Village Center, to an attractive crossroad and place of convergence for localities Metro Manila.

The Community Innovations Inc.'s Verdana Village Center will serve as a gateway to the Dasmariñas Cavite area and entrepreneurs are seeing benefits in its distinct features in a well-planned and well-designed commercial center.

30 commercial lots

The CIL on Ayala Land subdivision offers 30 commercial lots in two phases, with Phase 1 offering an initial 18 lots and Phase 2 following up with 12 lots, totaling 1.4 hectares of commercial space.

Prices start at P6.2 million for two-commercial lot locations makes it a vision of organized and planned development in the area, pulling together restaurants, cafés, convenience stores, entertainment, sports and recreational facilities, health and medical offices, banks and services, town schools and educational facilities, into one contemporary and fashionable harbor.

Transformation

As Metro Manila continues to expand, the towns and villages of Cavite grow with it, undergoing massive changes merely in the last decade. Housing developments and upscale residential villages, including CIL's own top-selling Verdana Homes subdivision, have transformed the rural area on entrance of the metropolis.

"Verdana Village Center is an integral part of Verdana Homes. CIL's successful first development and the primary market it clings and services. It will service the additional population for locations already established as Alabang Town Center, Festival Mall and SM Mall.

At one of the first commercial centers on Daang Hari, the new national road that will be completed this year, Verdana Village Center confirms the tremendous market potential of the area, servicing 17,000 households in Molino and surrounding Bacoor areas.

Meticulous planning

Verdana Village Center is set apart by its meticulous planning, a hallmark of CIL's philosophy of innovative, community-building development. With lots pre-equipped with utilities, from water to electricity to cable television, it ensures the growth of a more graceful and contemporary experience for shopping, dining and recreation.

Long-term value maintenance is assured thanks to its supervision by Ayala Property Management Corp., the company that manages Alabang Town Center, Ayala Center and Greenbelt.

The infrastructure of southern Metro Manila is the wave of the future. With its integrated planning and design talents, CIL will harness that wave in Verdana Village Center.

FIRST CONCRETE POURING FOR FORBESWOOD HEIGHTS
The pouring of the concrete's first layer signals the start of construction of Forbeswood Heights, a 26-tower luxury condominium development of property giant Megaworld Corp. and Bonifacio West Development Corp. Forbeswood Heights is the entry project within the Newtown area Forbes Town Center in Bonifacio Global City. At the construction pouring rites are, from left: BWDC director Kirk G. Young, president Charlie Rufino and vice chair Jacques Hagonoy; Megaworld executive vice president Andrew Tan; 19-1 Realty director Macario Rufino; and Megaworld SVP Gregorio Tan.

EGI launches 'first home' condos

EGI Homes Cavite Condominiums, the first project of noted condominium specialist E. Ganzon Inc. in Cavite province, and the first development in "first home" residential condominium in the province, was recently launched to the public at the project site.

The first home to be marketed is the "second home" which is a vacation or resort home.

Located immediately adjacent to the Cavite Export Processing Zone, the project is a community of 13 buildings with an elevator each near the Bacoor-Kawit-Noveleta-Rosario Coastal Road. Designed to develop close-to-nature and community interaction, it will have a grand entrance gate over a 12-meter road linking it to the Riverside Road, a central park that can be used for parking, an integral swimming pool, a clubhouse with function rooms, centralized water and sewer system and 100-volts electric power availability.

The first building of the residential complex is about 50 percent completed and was already granted a License to Sell by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board on Oct. 13 this year.

Model units were available for viewing during the project launch with Gov. Renato Malibu, Mayor Dennis Campana, Vice Mayor Luis Ferrer III and Cavite Area Administrator Digna Evasco among officials and guests. Also present were presidents of congress-in-store in the economic zone led by Cavite Export Zone Investors Association president Rolson Fujii.

The units are designed with class and distinction. French-style window grills, panoramic windows, provision for hot water bath, an engineered toilet and bath system, provision for telephone line and cable connection, individual shower and water meters, a refreshing atrium, laundry drying area, storage areas and ceramic tiles flooring. There's a choice of two—or three bedroom units.

Amazing is the price tag for typical units of P650 sq. m. each. With all the amenities and facilities available to unit owners enhancing privacy, security, convenience, ease of maintenance and a "lifestyle," the two-bedroom unit does not exceed the P1 million tag.

And, yes, one can purchase in installments through Pag-IBig, bank financing or in-house financing/EGI.

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OPINION

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Honest politicians

WHO is an "honest politician?" An honest politician, according to Simon Cameron, a politician who served as President Abraham Lincoln's secretary of war, is one who, when he is bought, will stay bought.

We hope that this description does not apply to any of the congressmen who signed the Articles of Impeachment against Chief Justice Hilario Davide.

EDITORIALS

For all we know, some—or all of them—may have been impelled by the noblest of motives in moving to impeach the Chief Justice.

And yet the doubts are there. Who was the prime mover of by so much secrecy and so much haste? Why were the leaders able to gather 60 signatures in so short a time? Did the signatories even have the time to read and study the charges against the Chief Justice? Or did what one congressman once said happen in the House: Sin can pass a piece of order paper around and just on your say-so, you can put a sizable number of congressmen to affix their signatures to it.

Why the haste? Was this a life-and-death issue? Could it not have been stranded with more deliberation, as befits so serious a matter as an impeachment, and not against the head of the Judicial Branch and the fifth highest ranking official of the land? The House is supposed to be a deliberative body, but did its members deliberate before acting on the Articles of Impeachment? Or did they act with deliberate haste—for the most questionable of motives?

Impeachment is an extreme remedy, an action of last resort in serious cases involving high government officials. Is the resort to impeachment at this time, when there are other remedies and recourse still open, justified?

Who threw a prime facie case against the Chief Justice? The Commission on Audit gave him and the Supreme Court a clean bill of health. Did this not count in the consideration of the charges by the nine-driven congressmen? Contrast this case with the impeachment cases against then Ombudsman Aniano Desierto and Elections Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco, where the complainants presented tons of evidence. And yet the impeachment cases against them did not prosper.

Tell us, Honorable Congressmen, that you were impelled by the purest of motives in moving to impeach Chief Justice Davide. The public needs to be reassured. Honest.

Courageous auditors

WE commend the "Powerpuff Girls" of the Commission on Audit whose accounting skills and incorruptibility resulted recently in a string of victories of the public over electric companies that had been overcharging the public.

An eight-member, all-women team found that Meralco had wrongly included its income tax among the costs recoverable from consumers. Now Meralco, upon a final decision of the Supreme Court, has to refund a total of P28.15 billion to its consumers representing the overcharges since 1994.

We applaud and commend the eight who were cited as the Civil Service Commission's recipients of the "Pag-asang Bayan" Award: state auditors Elenia Aguinio, Raquel Gergonio, Lilia Salagubang, Lady de Leon, Magdalena Soriano, Lita Aquino, Lourdes Moran and Nelia Velasco. May their tribe increase!

A single auditor was all it took to expose the malpractice of four electric cooperatives in the provinces in computing the disputed purchased power adjustment. She is Cherryll Apalisok who received the Presidential "Dangal ng Bayan" Award and some financial prizes for her accomplishment.

Apalisok had the scent of her life when a city official in Mindanao asked her how much money it would take for her to close over a "misconception," all the while cleaning his gun in front of her. Despite the implied threat, she went ahead and exposed the irregularity.

This is the type of state auditors who can be harassed in the campaign against graft and corruption. For starters, we suggest that they be assigned to scrutinize the disposition of the pork barrel, euphemistically called Countryside Development Fund, of the members of Congress.

But state auditors can't do the job of curbing graft and corruption all by themselves. They need the help of private citizens, civic groups, non-government organizations and other groups to form an irresistible force. With a strong public opinion behind it, perhaps the campaign against graft and corruption will finally gain some headway.

Congress should pass a law to stop extravagance

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

LET'S look at the bright side: The brouhaha over the impeachment of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. should have achieved at least one good thing: the realization that we really need to effect an extravagance in a time when the government and the people are desperately in short of money. And since the House presently controls the Judiciary Development Fund, a.k.a. the "JDF," and of Republicans, "The taxpayers' army should be able to draft a bill that would prevent a repetition of the same.

Based on her explanation on "Debate," Undersecretary Cheloy Garafil did not violate any law. I had to check the Millburn on the JDF to appropriate it; ruled, 69-20, between the court employees and the Supreme Court. The difference in opinion between the congressmen and Court officials is a matter of arithmetic. I believe that the Chief Justice followed the law and that everything she did was legal.

But being legal is not the same as being moral. Is it moral to be so extravagant just because the money is there and one is free to spend it, when millions of our countrymen are suffering in abject poverty? Is it moral to pay P120,000 for each chair (if this is true) to rest the butts of the justices on when that amount could already have provided a house for a homeless family? Is it moral to spend P6 million for curtains when that amount can already house a whole family? Is it moral to provide such justices with three luxury vehicles (again, if this is true) when each of them probably doesn't have one motor vehicle of his own? After all, he can ride in only one vehicle at a time. If others use the other vehicles, they are not assigned to the Justices.

This is a common sin of the government agencies, especially government financial institutions, and Congress should pass a law to stop this abuse and waste of the people's money. Officials who already enjoy several vehicles of their own, are provided, at the people's expense, with additional vehicles. And not just the ordinary ones but the expensive ones.

This may be understandable for officials who make frequent inspection trips to the provinces. But they include members of the board who rarely, if ever, leave their offices for board meetings—only once a month, because it is they who pass the resolutions authorizing the purchases. They even receive car plan that would allow them to own the vehicles after a few years, practically for free. They also include the in-house auditors, otherwise the latter would not allow the vehicle acquisitions.

To the sin of abuse of privilege and waste is added the crime of bribery. Governors and mayors bribe their provincial board members and councilors with vehicles bought with their own money, and the latter, in turn, bribe the government officials we pay for to inspect the vehicles that will eventually be given to them.

Not to drag out the ridiculous necessity of all people, and for that matter even every friend to resign because they bought themselves luxury vehicles. Further back, the manager of the National Housing Authority, which is supposed to provide houses for the poor, also had to resign because he bought himself a luxury vehicle and a special plate number with PCSO—but he had to back. He made a bad thing worse by losing part of an outing. "We are a rich country temporarily in power." These words of wisdom are now immortalized with other quotes from other government officials such as Bush senior's daughter-in-law and, "What are we in power for?" and "What's wrong with spending for one's future?"

Still further back, senators bought limos, when vehicles at the people's expense. There are so much public indignation that they too, like President Ferdy Marcos, were forced to return the vehicles. If I'm not mistaken, to this day senators and congressmen are not entitled to vehicles at public expense. If they're not entitled to these vehicles, why don't they pass a law to stop other officials from abusing this privilege?

Still further back, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo had misgivings but because of the scandal others he bought himself a helipan for P5,000, which was christened "the golden orchid." (It wasn't even gold plated.)

The general is right in a very poor country like the Philippines, where millions of people live a hand-to-mouth existence scrounging in garbage dumps, millions more live in squatter colonies, and tens of thousands of children and old people survive by begging in the streets, you are scandalous disaster by engaging in conspicuous consumption. Even the Marcoses and their family and cronies were kicked out of Malacañang by angry Filipinos partly because of their conspicuous consumption.

But going back to the Supreme Court and its Rigodon colleagues, if I heard it a decades-old tradition for the SC to refund to itself amounts I have in reserve, but we are now in the age of air conditioning. And with the Court's excess fund just considered for tens of millions of pesos, complete with P6 million curtains and P120,000 chair jobs (Chief Justice may get one that cost P27,000 each—BIL) the justices would be just as comfortable here as in Baguio. No excuse need to make the difficult trek to the Pines City.

There is not saying that the Chief Justice should not be impeached. But I think that this is not the occasion in Russia is a tradition that has been with us for decades and it has become a habit. But it is a bad habit that should be corrected. In the first place, it smacks of colonialism. The americanos colonials couldn't stand the summer heat of the lowlands so they developed the summer session in the cool heights of Baguio. The natives are now all Filipinos. They're as acclimated to the summer heat as the rest of us.

(To be concluded)

Widening gyre

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

"[ISSUE]" and turning to the widening gyre. The Edsa caucus knew the [dictum]: "Things fall apart; the center cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world." The Mindanao caucus knew it, and everybody else. The ceremony of innocence is drowned." To hell with all convention, while the worst are full of passionate intensity."

Those are William Butler Yeats' lines from "The Second Coming." They're as apt a piece as description of the apocalypse as anyone can get, and they're how used again and again to describe times of madness and madness, doom and disaster. There have depicted in art, mind for words and created them because of the situation we find ourselves in today. To call what we're facing in the "war against terror" is to call material but a "crisis in governance." It's a explanation of epic proportions. What we have is a world turning and turning in the widening gyre, things falling apart, anarchy let loose upon the world. Be here do not have conviction, and the worst are full of passionate intensity. The center cannot hold.

But it's not as if everything just broke loose only in recent weeks. The war between Congress and the Judiciary is but the latest in a series of crises that have ravaged the nation over the last two years. And it's not the first Get. The execution of life being yanked off from its moorings and open around by a rules-long mind did not set in only last week, it did so with living being elected president and spread well after he went. Over the last six years, we've had many Edsas, all of which would take a classes and to name but to mention.

During Erap's time, we had not only Erap's attempt to bury Marcos in Libingan ng mga Bayani, in hopes in an attempt to resurrect himself as one could find, the transformation of Malacañang into a den of thieves, morally, all sorts of shady characters congregating there in the wee-hing hours to hatch their plots with the aid of pizza and Blue Label, the closing down of the Manila Times and the harassment of the locomo. Erap enforcing government and shore hours to pull out jobs from the latter, such as [illegible] to another coming to light involving extortionations from banks to the Department of Education, and the impeachment trial, the first in Philippine history.

During GMA's time, we've had "John III," a grotesque explosion of support for Erap for a re-established bond, a quite legitimate celebration of the poor, the spontaneous subversion of democratic practices by the "war against terror"; the return of US military presence in the country, a military matter, the first in more than a decade, a byproduct of the indictment of ex-army, a President running not to run again, a President running anyway, egging on the same on politics, at the end of the impeachment, a spate of Davide Jurgson's appeal against Erap to the Davide Lacson's appeal against Mike Arroyo complete with a parallel between the Philippines and Nero Pilate, but which had a different ending; the current impasse between Congress and the Judiciary.

There's been one other common denominator in GMA's time. That is that 70 percent of the population now wants to leave the country. The Erap years came. And only slightly more. I caught a glimpse of it in the back in two years ago when I visited the US several months before 9/11. People I never expected to give up on the Philippines had given up on their country, and were living financially better but emotionally miserable in the US. Many of them were gay doctors, writers and musicians.

Today, the best have not come to those who've stayed—amply represented by Standing Congress's and Jose de Venecia's hero as Congress—are full of passionate intensity.

It's easy to blame external factors for the widening gyre, not least of them the 1997 financial crisis that Fidel Ramos was lucky enough to encounter only during the end of his term. Before that, Ramos rode the crest of an Asian boom, many countries in the region turning into dragons, tigers and IBGs. It's equally easy to blame a worldwide recession and the uncertainties brought on by war and terrorism. GMA is just finding her boots made to order for.

But all that is totally refuted by the example of Malaysia. As though to rub our noses in the dirt, at the time we were being sucked by the war Congress had brought to the Judiciary's doorstep, Malaysia was having the time of its life. Mahathir Mohamad was stepping down from office after 22 years in power, and he was leaving behind a country that is certainly no rose-bed of progress in 22 years. Indeed, after observing two apparently comparables in Singapore—and for more comparability since Singapore is just a small city state—and turning himself into a powerful voice in world affairs by being a bitter critic of American "hegemony" and "imperialism."

We may not always envy Mahathir for his democratic failings—certainly we envy not for yet Anwar Ibrahim, whom he threw in jail for being a threat on his rule—but we have got to admire him for what he has done for his country. Malaysia is a country that is [illegible]. This land, sole one of those Southeast Asian countries crushing students in IP and other Philippines schools to learn how to do things. It was a country we could still afford to try to lend problems from. Look where it is now—and look where we are now.

The last six years in particular have been spectacularly sickbed to us. There are many reasons for why we have plunged steeply into this pit in that short period of time, things falling apart, anarchy being loosed, the center cannot hold, the worst are full of passionate intensity. But the biggest lack of leadership at the head, or center, of everything. That's relied less at the head of it, leverage as it may sound. Erap and Gloria are so alike and very different from each other.

There are very much the same.

(To be concluded)

In search of a dozen heroes

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cavanaugh

(AAT Oct. 28, Sec. Lavoglidis: Banning of Apasan del Norte names Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. an apology for opposing the second impeachment complaint. He stressed he had no intention to debase the Chief Justice, or assault the independence of the judiciary or "spill the blood of non" in these times of uncertain peace" in our country. "With a heavy heart and respect for the rule of law, I made a corrupt and erroneous signing," Banning said. How do you square that with the impeachment complaint, the signing the ninth representative in front. "The others were Rozanna Biazon, Mamelito Cruz, Angelo Palmones, Jo Salimo, Edgar Jopson Eduardo Nieto, Bayani Mercado and Del de Guzman.) Reports indicate that others may follow suit soon, and no citizens should help continue them.

If the signatories would be brought down to less than 76, the complaint will go back to the justice committee where possible safeguards against abuse of the Judicial Conduct Act (Republic Act 1293) could be more closely studied. It's now obvious that most of the congressmen did not get the memo that governance by the complaint to commit tax is now also becoming popular as a way to score the seemingly certain clash between the House of Representatives and the Supreme Court, which could plunge the country into a deep abyss. Banning has since withdrawn as counsel of the highest national interest is still the best option. The nation is in search of a decent heroes.

* * *

The updated impeachment list as of yesterday includes the following names: Reps. Joseph Santiago, Darlene Custodio, Gregorio Ipong, Benito Ambolon, Claude Bautista, Antonio Nocal, Augusto Montilla, Benjamin Lim, Jr., Ramon Mitra, Carlos Radaller, Isidoro Rodriguez Jr., Ramon Bondoc, Gherghi Aggabao, Carlos Cojuangco, Elias Yapse, Jesli Lapus, Alfredo Maranon, Sherwin Gatchalian, Douglas Cagas, Genaro Alagadan, Felix Fuentebella, Rodolfo Plaza, Gilbert Remulla, Eric Singson, Miguel Zubiri, Celso Lobregat, Rene Velarde, Aurora Pijuan, Jacinto Paras, Agapito Aquino, Emilio Macias, Ronaldo Albano, Harry Bagging, Antares Edades and Joaquin Chipeco.

* * *

Ladies! Banning, who was first in the ranks in his 22 years of government service which included some as a consultant and vice mayor of Quezon City, was heading to no one, only the Constitution." A law from College of Law Class '66 graduate whose services included former Justices Florenz Regalado and Jose Vitug, and former Senators Raul Roco and Tito Guingona, he stressed that he signed on the mistaken notion that the new House rules on impeachment allowed the filing of the second complaint immediately as the first complaint was dismissed "not initiated yet." But upon consulting the record of the Constitutional Commission on July 18, 1986, Banning said, it became clear to him that in the thinking of the Constitution framers, filing is the same as "initiating." Thus, between the House rules and the Constitution, the latter should prevail, and the impeachment complaint is considered initiated. Banning is to have pushing the complaint and countering the House rule committee of the whole, in order to delve deeper into the JDV.

Another opinion the Apasan congressman is basing it in the practice in the United States, where impeachment complaints recommended by the opposition evaporated the issues in an impeachment, prior to the actual filing of the case. Read that in the impeachment case against President Bill Clinton, independent counsel Kenneth Starr who was recommended by the Republicans, did thorough spadework first. Banning agrees that if Congress really wants this oversight function over the JDV, it should amend PD 1949 which not only created the JDV but also put its disbursements solely under the Chief Justice's prerogative.

* * *

An issue last: John Ocampo called up reporters to protest no hearing written that the Indictment Committee on Justice, Representative Bill No. 2675 which seeks to amend PD 1949, the Sharon decree that established the new controversial JDV. The Cebu senator, who's famous for not minding words, stressed that he is the author of this bill, whereas Singh Michael Defensor, who's the chair of the committee on justice, is the sponsor of the bill when it is reported out in the plenary. SB 2675 institutionalizes one of the 600 alluring 40 percent for cost of living allowance of court employees and personnel to propose fees for their basic salaries, and not more than 20 percent for office equipment and facilities. It also seeks to put a stop to the popular but malevolent practice of justices, judges and court personnel receiving compensation and allowances from local government units. So expressly prohibiting it. I thoroughly support this prohibition.

Those brave women of COA

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

(It's not an law about their honorary "title," the "Personnel Clerk," but the various auditors of the Commission on Audit deserve every bit of recognition that's come their way, including—or especially, depending on your hierarchy of needs—a blue ribbon pageant and every other kind of fanfare.

Recognized by the Civil Service Commission with the "Tag ang ng Bayan Hugis of the Nation" Award, the women who tirelessly and doggedly uncovered the irregularities in Metrobank's tax exemption claims have had to divide the P50,000 cash prize among the eight of them. But that's not the reward enough to put over 50,000 tax each of them, not much considering that the "loan-tressed" participant in a show-biz awards night got to take home at least P 50,000!

But then, as the women told reporter Bob Cornelio, it was not the cash prize that motivated them to do their report: rear the utility gave P38.11 billion to refunds, it would certainly have been easy for libraries, if it were so inclined, to dangle even "just" a billion before the auditors to help motivate financial "go-easy" on their findings.

The winners were thought that nobody from Metrobank had dared approach them with a bribe or a threat, though the company did try one last-ditch effort at getting them to go over "new" materiality or further period, which the women discovered were the same papers they had already gone over.

Still, the possibilities for graft and corruption in such a situation were just too rife to ignore. What was to stop even just one of the women auditors, for instance, from sending say bribes to Metrobank that for a million or so reasons, she and some of her colleagues could be convinced to change their minds?

Maybe it's the awareness of how much moral stamina was required to resist the temptations of such a situation that convinced the CSC to honor the women of the COA.

* * *

ANOTHER auditor was similarly honored by the CSC: Cheryll Apalisoc who "singlehandedly" uncovered astounding malpractices by at least four electric cooperatives in the computerization of the controversial purchased power adjustment (PPA).

Visiting the eight women who audited Meralco, Apalisoc had to have drawn base-faced bribes and even more bare-faced threats and power brokering. The cooperatives official even hinted that she could face sanctions from COA Chair Guillermo Carague, who, as the official statement, was "close" to them.

To his credit, and I can believe the story having known Gus Carague throughout his many years of government service, the COA chair refunded the power brokers, urging them to "get rid of this ridiculous opinion of corruption."

While this just goes to show that the courage of the lowly bureaucrat is still be of no import if it is not matched and supported by the courage and integrity of the bureaucrat's superiors. If the COA higher-ups had so much as cast their eyeballs that they would willingly overlook compromising practices and financial sleight of hand, I'm sure the women auditors would have folded at the first manifestations of pressure or persuasion.

* * *

THAT the CSC considered the exemplary public service now all women was no accident. For one, the odds favor women as outstanding government employees. The bureaucracy suds and file, but especially the mid-level professionals, are overwhelmingly women. It would be safe to say indeed, that the government's day to day operations are in the hands of women, and it's only fair and in obviously in the interests of government offices, content to let their predominantly male bosses claim all the glory and the bigger paychecks.

One of the planks of Alumni Thing's legislative agenda, in fact, is equity in the appointment of women to the bureaucracy in positions of power and real decision-making. It seems unfair, doesn't it, that women still have to put up with the "glass ceiling" effect when women employees are women, they make up less than 10 percent of those holding supervisory or higher positions.

Appointing more women to key posts in government may also make sense from governance point of view. Studies of how the world does what women, on average, exhibit a more stringent sense of moral scruples and are less willing to bend their principles to the exigencies of daily needs.

Maybe religiosity has something to do with it, especially for devout Filipinas. But I'm inclined to believe that it has more to do with the fact that women take their roles as mothers seriously, and feel they must live out the values they seek to impart to their children.

* * *

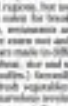
THOUGH it's why I want to happy to see the women's presence on government's increase from pages, grabbing the above-the-fold place of honor for once from our national politicians who've done nothing but sicken our sensibilities.

Consider the contrast, for instance, between the photo of the humble women of the COA and the photos of Senate's "first" lady," young politicians already flaunt with the power of their office.

Staring at the picture, at the women in their modest-to-get government-issue uniforms, I felt proud to be counted among them—a 40plus/ woman—who "always to conquer," fulfilling glad tidings of motherhood and responsibility by the simple power of hard work done well, done quietly, but done with a firm sense of accountability and personal honesty.

I don't think a grateful nation can ask for more from its citizens. And if it means being counted as a "brown-pair Girl," I don't think the brave women auditors will mind the sacrifice too much.

Pho and old houses



SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Ramthi L. Harper

(WHETHER walking or riding around the city of Ho Chi Minh if your adult "Saigon" has a more musical ring to it), it's hard to imagine that the country suffered 40 years of war and has only been open to the outside in the last decade. Impressive examples of 19th century French style architecture dominate the downtown colonial buildings, while their Victorian wedding-cake décor painted sparkling clean. Colonial homes with tiled roofs have been converted into restaurants serving French or Vietnamese cuisine, and the towering trees around places made my companion remark that typhoons mustn't pass this way often.

The air-conditioned tourist goal, with wide streets somewhat remind the visitor of Paris. Everywhere people are chattering, eating and riding the three million motorbikes on lanes weaved for them. There are seven million inhabitants in this once war-torn capital, all busy, it seems. The poverty-stricken countryside has the people certainly have joined the market economy.

Temporary food stalls proliferate along many sidewalks and public spaces in the cities. Some stalls are open until early in the morning to cater to regular customers. Several times, women ran for cover as sudden rainfalls sent the crowds on the pavement in form makeshift shop floors. After two or three hours, when there are no more customers, they begin to remove all of their wooden furniture, so that the place resumes its former appearance. You can't help comparing it to the utter lack of discipline displayed by our own residents, with the complexity of officials to return for a row or a bribe. It's enough to make you wonder whether democracy works for us.

Across our hotel is a small place with a front-line flanking the open-air home built in 1900, with bright-colored tables and chairs on the patio. In the evening, as one dear café blooms and people take their drinks basking in the cool breeze. Across, Felix Fuentebella, Marcelino Libanan, Adi Domino, Rodolfo Ibardo, Teodoro Ole Jr., Manuel Ortega, Henning Mascarinas, Dimen Joaquin, Benaldo Zamora, Mark Cojuangco, Aniel Lobrenza, Jesena Jesse, Amado Espino, Abraham Mitra, Rodigan Bongolan, Mary Sotto, Rodolfo Plaza, Gilbert Remulla, Rene Velarde, Georgia Hontiveros, Jose Carlos Lacson, Soraya Jimlin, Wilhelmina Alvarado, Augusto Nanulin, Augusto Syjuco, Eric Singson, Miguel Zubiri, Celso Lobregat, Rene Velarde, Aurora Pijuan, Jacinto Paras, Agapito Aquino, Emilio Macias, Ronaldo Albano, Harry Bagging, Antares Edades and Joaquin Chipeco.

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For Aamikhail

(MAH Mail,

Hello! How are you? Your two aunts told me they saw you with four friends. They're your new friends, I suppose. They said you looked different. Prettier, healthier and, of course, happier.

I wonder if I'll see you again—alone, or with your new friends. I'm not sure if I'm ready to see you. Maybe that's the reason I don't get to see you. I am not ready yet.

But here I miss you.

I miss everything about you. I miss your thick, shiny and smooth hair. How you hated to wear it down, even if I told you you looked like a model when you did. But although you insisted it pulled up in a ponytail.

I miss your eyes. They were hidden behind your glasses during classes but they seemed to smile at all times. Yes, I really liked it when you smiled. your eyes seemed to smile with your lips. You smiled at the sweetest jokes, and I hate that, too. The very true boyfriend, even the way you cried. It broke my heart every time. I saw you cry. I would have done anything to make sure you wouldn't cry. But I really liked it when I finally got to comfort you and wipe away your tears and long you.

Now I miss our hugs and kisses. We "I love you's" every morning and night. I miss those handwritten notes I would call to ask how you were, if you had eaten your lunch and what you had been doing. I now wonder if it bothered you that I asked the same questions, or was the same text messages every day. Nah, it's not like you to be bothered by things like those. Your notes always meant to me—and to everybody.

Oh, I will keep your promises, and of course, your letters. Those letters made me feel you thought about me that day. I sort of reread them these past few weeks, now and over again. Why I have memorized them! You wrote that you hope I'll always be happy for when I am happy, you are happy. And that you'll love me forever. So typical of you, putting me first before yourself. Ah, those letters never fail to make me cry.

Oh, I will stop now. I'm fine. Yes, I am sad—how can I not be, I will just. And like I have told many times, I will cry, naturally, when you leave, but you don't have to worry about me, alone or, and that you should go whenever you feel it's time to leave.

I just hope your new friends will take good care of you. I'm sure they can't take better care of you than I can. I'm quite worried about that. We have talked about that matter. I was certain you would have good friends with you. Real angels, like you.

It makes me sad that you had to leave. But still I want to thank you for spending time with me. Those eight years were my happiest. I feel so blessed that you chose me. Thank you very much.

I think I feel better now. It's just that I wish to see you, too, many dreams. You see, baby, mommy is not afraid of ghosts.

And one more thing, I will love you forever too, Khalil

Love,

Mommy

Michelle Thea Flaza, 20, is the mother of Aamikhail. It also had breakup of Dallas once birth. Medical records like works as Fu plus Int Software Philippines Inc. as a software developer.

Dear Grandmother

Gabriel Allenza Coronel

WE miss you dear grandmother,
But we know you're here forever.
Here you were kind and nice,
Now you are in paradise.
We're sorry for the bad things we did to you.
Pero still keep our hearts in your eyes.
Our hearts we fill to God and you,
Because we know you love us too.
Here on earth we weep and mourn,
Now our hearts are wounded and torn.
But here for you will never end,
Until our chains of love will seem bend.
Here we look up and stand,
To you and God's angel hand.
Our eyes have tears that cry for you,
Now praying and crying are all we do.
But still I know you're here with me,
Thanks for loving our family.
I love you dear grandmother,
Five memories I will cherish forever.

Gabriel Allenza Coronel, 10, is in Grade V at De La Salle Zobel School. He wrote this poem as a gift for her grandmother, Belinda C. Olivares, on what would have been her 74th birthday and 50th wedding anniversary this June 11.

IN THE NEWS

Fernando Poo Jr.

Sacrifices that build up our lives

OUR lives stand on the sacrifices of so many...our parents, our teachers, our martyrs, heroes and saints.

Sacrifice is an important word. It comes from Latin words, "sacro" and "facere." To sacrifice then means to make sacred. Our lives become sacred because of sacrifice. Sacrifice transforms. It transforms individuals, communities, entire societies and even the world. The great men and women of the world by their sacrifice have transformed the world. Recently Mother Teresa of Calcutta was beatified by Pope John Paul II. Those two individuals in their unique and special ways, have transformed the world.

When we sacrifice, we forget ourselves and offer up something for the good of others. Sacrifice, whether big or small, is always an act of selflessness, always an act of love.

Isaiu was an event which involved personalities and groups. However, after three Isaius we wonder why real change never took place. From Cory Aquino to Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, four presidents after the Marcos dictatorship on EDSA has changed to our lives. We looked at the SSS and the personalities involved in those events and asked what was wrong, what was lacking?

My own personal recollections of the Isaius revolve around my experience of sacrifice, that of mine and the many others who for a few days forgot themselves and offered something for the good of others. Three important elements make up Edsa: prayer, solidarity and, most importantly, sacrifice.

Edsa 1 took place after the long and painful years of sacrifice under and against the cruel, inhuman and unjust Marcos dictatorship. Many lost property, business and even lives. One case involved the Lapuras. They lost Mendiola. Marcos ordered Mendiola sequestered and placed under government control. This was painful for the Lapuras. After Edsa 1, President Aquino restored Mendiola to the Lapuras.

Today, 17 years after the Lapuras regained Mendiola, both the Lapuras and many of us have forgotten our sacrifices during the Marcos years.

Today, thousands of us march to Mendiola to remind the Lapuras of their sacrifices of the Marcos years. We do more and ask them to stop sacrificing us on the altar of profit and greed. This is only the beginning. Edsa can still succeed with prayer, solidarity and sacrifice.

—FR. ROBERT REYES, Guadalupe

Dividends for GMA in 2004

IN THE HAZE of gross national uncertainty and mounting poverty plaguing the Philippines, the announcement of President Macapagal-Arroyo that she will run for the presidency in 2004 is a welcome development. This courageous move will put an end to the political discourse of 2003-2004 that favored various leaders of the country to put their time, talents, effort and financial resources toward endless bickering rather than in socially beneficial undertakings. Her announcement has placed the Philippine political landscape in clearer perspective, which can be summed up to a question of options as follows: "Do we want good governance and economic recovery which is certain under President Macapagal or are we willing to gamble with political uncertainty under a new administration?" The answer should be obvious. We cannot afford to experiment in this crisis-ridden.

A mandate coming from the 2004 elections will give the Philippines a much-needed boost. President Macapagal-Arroyo has never been more lucid. She has learned the hard way from the mistakes of the past, such as to the appointment of one or two misfits in sensitive posts and mass indictments to grandstanding and self-serving maneuvers of power, political personalities. This time, we shall see a President Macapagal who will be armed with a longer list of better-qualified appointees for sensitive posts. This time, we shall see a President Macapagal who will rally us to unity and cooperative endeavors, not for unity's sake, but toward the achievement of strategic objectives such as the flourishing of higher value-added enterprises in various sectors that will make available more and better-paying jobs that will lift the majority of Filipinos out of poverty.

President Macapagal's experience with the bureaucracy, coupled with her good grounding in economics, will put the talents sorting 3000. Law are larger, and the Philippines will not be left behind as it was under the Marcos regime. Investments in its team neighbors. As President Macapagal continues to pursue the measures she has started in order to have an efficient and morally superior bureaucracy, we shall see good governance. Corruption in the public service will be reduced to a minimum.

Then shall we witness the advent of better delivery of social services and improvement in the quality of Philippine infrastructure that, to this day, seems to be but an elusive dream. All these are bound to spawn the much-awaited recovery and sustain the positive GDP growth, benign inflationary environment, and stability in the peso's foreign exchange rate. All that has characterized President Macapagal's management of the Philippine economy.

—WILLIAM B. TITAL
B.A., Market Securities Inc., n/a
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Lapid should reconsider son's candidacy

WITHOUT saying it, Gov. Manuel Lapid has implied that his son, Mark, is indispensable to the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats to maintain his reelection as governor-candidate of Pampanga. This is what one could deduce from the news item "Team candidates keeps Lapid edge" (10/6, 'A-3/10:00 What made the popular governor think so, to jeopardize many independent political watchers in the province).

Many believe the governor should not be deluded into thinking that his son's stay in the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (as its last-losing chair of the DE Presidential Residence and, lately chair of the ABC Provincial Federation, has earned him that esteemed status in his party. He should think it over and use whatever wisdom he has gained from serving as a three-term governor before overcommitting the edifice.

Next, three positions were offered on a silver platter to Mark, because he is the "First Son" of the province. It is the practice not only in Pampanga that sons and daughters are usually accorded a chance to—no, by those positions for no other reason than that their fathers or mothers would political power in their locality to expectation of future political favors rather than proven capabilities in the fans for the television is not for public office.

Second, many Kapampangans are unaware of Mark's work output in provincial ordinances and resolutions supposed to successfully passed into law during his incumbency as provincial board member.

Third, unmarked rule in Pampanga stated when Spain declared it as the first province in Luzon in 1571. We have elections, not successions, to determine who should govern the province. It would be more "monumentally" if more seasoned and equipped Kapampangans are given the hands to steer the province to greater heights of progress and development.

Governor Lapid is doing more harm and frustrating his son's chances in the coming elections and endangering his own political career as well. Instead of using his influence to secure his party's endorsement for his son's candidacy, he should let him fight his own fight and show his true mettle and earn the right to run for governor of Pampanga. Many voters would find it hard to vote for a man hiding behind his father's popularity and accomplishments but also for allowing him to do actual battle to a contest so important as that over the governorship of Pampanga.

—RAUL G. SERRIENTO,
Porac, Sandan Pampanga

Translate uproar to votes in 2004

SEN. Juan ed de Quiroz' column on Dec. 17 in the PDI had hit several nails right on their heads. I'm sure his expressions of anger shared over the shameful shenanigans of our political leaders find resonance in many of our countrymen including myself.

What was shocking to me was the time when the Marcoses and their bahoys, crooks and cronies were allowed back to Malacañang. I became even more revolted when they began to spread their sordid tentacles and thus started calling the shots once again.

They now have gotten even bolder and bolder as to brazenly impeach the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Despite the so very dubious grounds for impeachment, they seem determined to sacrifice the whole country in order to achieve their unwholesome ends.

I hope and pray that the present uproar, loudly uproar among the people, is not up by this pro-Marcos gang of immoral tyrants, will translate into their total repudiation in the 2004 polls.

—C. B. PAULE, MD.
1000 St. Mark St.
Pembroke, NJ 07728, USA

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Southeast Asia's strongmen (1)

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE FOUNDING members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations were Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei and Thailand. These countries were described as being part of the "Free World," choosing to be pro-Western and capitalist. "Free Pinoyme" has been equated with "democracy," but the reality is that the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand have been, at one time or another, by strong men. I will explain, shortly, why I've collapsed the two words into one.

Implicit in the rest of the Asean world, with a nationalist that has never had pretensions about democratic rule. The other countries all claim to be electoral multi-party democracies but each has had its share of dictators and authoritarian leaders, complete with predictable elections where the ruling party would get not all the votes.

Thailand had several Aeopotic generals but cases stayed in power beyond 10 years. I will write more about the more durable of these strongmen, the last of whom was Mahathir Mohamad, who retired last Saturday after 22 years as prime minister of Malaysia. There's a long time, but really about the average for the region's authoritarian leaders.

The shortest authoritarian experiment was that of our own Ferdinand Marcos, who was president for only 14 years, from 1965 to 1986. Sukarno, Indonesia's founder, was Indonesia's head of state from the declaration of independence in 1945 to 1968, or 23 years. The last two years of Sukarno's presidency were really more symbolic, the power having passed on to Suharto, who had been appointed "temporary" president in 1966. That temporary presidency stretched on till 1998, for a total of 32 years.

Suharto was in power only slightly longer than Lee Kuan Yew, who was Singapore's prime minister from 1959 (he was only 35 years old then) till 1990, for a total of 31 years. Lee Kuan Yew continues to sit in the Singapore cabinet as senior minister and to speak out on many national issues. Mahathir will, no doubt, take on a similar role in Malaysian politics.

These strongmen's terms spanned an entire generation, yet many Asians, including Filipinos, will argue that you need these strongmen to ensure that long is granted to be able to bring about changes. Strongman politics has in fact been the norm in the region for the longest time, a characteristic of tribal and feudal societies. Even before Western colonizers came into the region, we already had datus, sultans and kings, ruling with absolute power and relying on a small coercive force of warriors and soldiers.

In the post-colonial context, some of these strongmen had to rule over large countries, often artificially stitched together by the Western colonizing powers. If you think the Philippines is geographically and culturally fragmented, you should look at Indonesia, the world's fourth largest country in terms of population, with some 300 ethnic groups spread out over 13,000 islands. Malaysia and Singapore had much smaller populations but faced additional problems of multi-racial tensions. Singapore, with a predominantly ethnic Chinese population, was in fact the product of secession from Malaysia.

Lee, Suharto, Sukarno, Mahathir and Marcos all criticized "Western" democracy as being inappropriate for Asians. Each proposed his own alternative to Western systems, but all were authoritarian. Suharto had his "guided democracy". Sukarno had his "King Christ" and Marcos had his "revolution from the center," claiming to offer a middle way between "rightism" (the traditional oligarchy) and the "leftism" (the communists).

All these leaders exercised ultimate in accept dictatorial rule by arguing that moral, economic and developmental crises called for unbiased sacrificing civil liberties. Fundamental security was invoked, usually by pointing to the threat of communistic insurgencies, to impose draconian laws, ranging from media censorship to internal security laws that allowed arrests and prolonged detention without formal charges.

Singapore went even further, launching experiments in social engineering, passing laws, rules and regulations that regulated every facet of its citizens' lives. There were all kinds of do and don't laws—banning chewing gum, for example (now rescinded, I hear), as well as requiring the flushing of toilets. This Big Brother mentality remains, with the government still playing an important role in everyday life, all the way up to launching campaigns urging Singaporeans to smile more.

Southeast Asians joke about Singapore as antiseptic and dour. My favorite joke is the one about Singapore's drugs running across the border into Malaysia just to be able to bark. But many also still very often sometimes couldn't have imitated Lee Kuan Yew to develop. In the Philippines, a variation on this wistful thinking is that Marcos could have been as successful as Lee Kuan Yew in economic planning if it had not been for his greedy wife.

Such speculation only underscores the need to look more closely into the different experiences we've had with authoritarianism in the region and figure out just how much strongman rule actually contributed to development. That's what I'll tackle on Thursday.

ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail pi_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Cordero

ABS-CBN 'aggressively' trying to pirate GMA 7 show host

By Pinmeg B. Cruz

GMA 7 talent Bernadette Sembrano is being "aggressively" wooed by ABS-CBN after she was released by the struggling three-bar network.

Angel Pangilinan-Manahan, Bernadette's manager, said they had met with ABS-CBN executives early this week.

ABS-CBN is supposedly eyeing Bernadette as replacement for Willie Revillame in the Saturday afternoon public service program "Wowowee Stars," which aired its final telecast last October.

Bernadette has her own program, "Walk Ka Lang," which is also public service fare on GMA 7.

But Angel denied Bernadette would be receiving Willie. She said Willie had called her up last week, but she refused to disclose what they talked about.

Angel said GMA 7 was willing to let Bernadette go, "but as of now, Bernadette is still committed to 'Walk Ka Lang.'"

GMA 7 officer in charge for corporate communications affairs Butch Abrogar told Inquirer the

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bacyadan

NBI exec shoots it out with robber

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—A suspected highway robber was wounded after engaging a National Bureau of Investigation official in a shootout on Friday in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya, about 90 km from here.

Ronald Mangaoang, who the NBI tagged as a suspect for a series of highway robbery incidents in Region 02 and Mt. Province, is now facing charges of direct assault, frustrated homicide and illegal possession of firearms, following a shootout with lawyer Jose Limmayog, NBI Cagayan Valley director.

NBI agent Ronald Batalo said the shootout ensued after Limmayog, who was on his way to Bontoc, Mt. Province, alighted from his car and confronted Mangaoang whom he recognized as a robbery suspect, along a road in Bayombong, Region 02.

Based on the complaint he filed with the NBI office here on Monday, Limmayog said he had to immediately seek cover after Mangaoang started shooting him using a .45 cal. revolver.

Limmayog said he returned the after wasting that the suspect had run out of bullets. He hit Mangaoang in the thigh and abdomen.

Doctors at the Medical Mission Group Hospital in Solano town, where the suspect was taken, said Mangaoang would not be interviewed.

Batalo said Mangaoang is a member of a robbery gang that had been preying on motorists and buses along the Nueva Vizcaya-Province road. Melvin Gascon, *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Another Army exec punished in Gen. Santos

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—An Army officer has been placed on floating status for allegedly beating a tricycle driver here last September.

Col. Edgardo Quiwa, chief of the Joint Task Force Getsan (JTF-10) and deputy commander of the Army's 102nd Infantry Brigade, told reporters that lt. Danilo Pantoja would be restricted to the barracks for a year as part of the disciplinary action against him.

Quiwa said Pantoja would also lose his chance to be promoted during the period he is in the "freezer."

Despite the decision of the victim not to push through with the criminal complaint, the military headquarters has slapped Pantoja with an administrative sanction.

On Sept. 28, Pantoja boarded a tricycle and asked the driver to bring him to the JTF-10 headquarters in Barangay Buda. But the driver, a resident of Lagao, a barangay in this city, asked the military officer to guide him as he was not familiar with the area.

Verbal insults ensued between the two and when the tricycle finally reached the unit, Jowel's passenger Florencio punched the driver before leaving.

The driver asked the help of journalists in elevating the complaint to higher military officials here. Agudo Z. Zurbito, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

BACOLOD, CEBU

Court employees go on mass leave

COURT operations in Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental and Iloilo were paralyzed after the employees went on mass leave to demand higher wages.

Dressed in red T-shirts, about 900 court employees in Bacolod City and Negros Oriental converged at the Bacolod Hall of Justice and held a street march.

After the march, they all went home, leaving the courts empty.

Some of the judges remained in the courthouses, like Bacolod Regional Trial Court Judge Roberto Chavez Jr. "We are here in case there are urgent matters that need to be acted on," he said.

But RTC Judge Ray Alfaro Orfilen said that even if the judges were present in court, the operations were paralyzed because there were no employees.

Jane Tolentino, president of the Coalition of Trial Court Employees of Negros Occidental, said the week-long mass leave might last longer if their demands are not met.

"Our protest actions is being staged because of our emergency salary increases granted under the Judiciary Compensation Act," he said.

"We are demanding wage increases in the light of the recent hike in salaries of judges and justices equivalent to 100 percent of their basic salaries to be given over a period of four years," he added.

In Negros Oriental, more than 300 court employees joined in the mass leave.

Thereafter Bagay Jr., president of the Philippine Association of Court Employees (PACE) Negros Oriental, said court employees should also be given a salary increase proportional to the increases received by judges and justices.

"Like them (judges and justices), we have our families to feed also," he said. Inquirer news service

He claimed that their court actions had nothing to do with the moves to impeach Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr over the alleged misuse of the Judicial Development Fund (JDF).

Except for the arrangements of their protest, Bagay says, employees who cooperated in the Chief Justice Ramon Avancena Hall of Justice in Iloilo City after about 200 court employees joined the mass leave.

The employees wearing red armbands and ribbons assembled at the lobby of the Hall of Justice at 7:45 a.m. and did not report for work. They protest action will last until Wednesday.

Cesar Bagadiola, Court Legal Researchers Association of the Philippines (Clerap)-Iloilo vice president, said their protest action was similar in defense of Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. in support of the impeachment complaint filed against him.

"We don't want politicians to ride on the issues we are raising," Bagadiola said.

In Cebu City, the Clerk of Court of the Municipal Trial Court in Cities expressed surprise why employees' complaints garnered how the Supreme Court and the JDF when their case of living allowances (Cola) increased during the term of Davide.

Tesorio Buenaventura said it was possible that these employees did not compare their salaries and allowances very well.

Buenaventura said her monthly salary including her allowances could reach up to more than P18,000. She, however, admitted that the clerks of court were considered as next to the judges in terms of salaries and allowances.

But Buenaventura said a utility worker is receiving at least P5,000 in basic salary but received at least P7,750 in Cola every month, high-er than her Cola, which is between P2,500 and P2,750.

Buenaventura said the Cola from the JDF differs every month because this is dependent on the collection of the filing fees. Carla P. Gomez, *Visayas Bureau Jr., Atong G. Armenda and Jhaimee Pagadduan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

THE PROTESTING employees at the Bacolod Hall of Justice paralyzed court operations during their mass leave yesterday.

HOSPITALITY
IPI soldiers watch as ethnic Mueller dance in the remote village of Tabangaway in Zamboanga City during a recent medical mission in the village which was held under heavy security.

₱83M razed in Albay fire

TABACO CITY—A four-hour fire of still undetermined origin burned the dormitory of Bowen Memorial Supermarket at the heart of this city on Ali Eatons Day.

The fire, the third in his the public market in 15 years, started at around 3 a.m. and damaged some 160 million worth of goods and other pieces of property.

Fire trucks from neighboring towns rushed to the fire scene but were not enough to control the damaged.

Fire Senior Insp. Renato Dimas, city fire marshal, said firefighters immediately climbed up the burning three-story market building where they rescued more than a dozen people who were trapped at the second and third floors.

No casualty was reported but 40 the 100 stalls, except for the ground floor, have been cleared, Mayor Alex Baroy said.

In Cebu City, 21 houses were gutted in the fire that broke out at about 4:20 a.m., on Saturday in an urban poor area in Barangay Mabolo, said SPO1 Rita Rosario, Cebu City Fire Department investigator.

No one was hurt in the fire that destroyed about P500,000 worth of property, he said.

Initial investigation showed that the fire was triggered by faulty electrical wiring at the house of Bernardo Comejon. It spread to other houses and was put under control in 20 minutes. Ash Ruiz, *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Clemente Abapalbazar, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Another Army exec punished in Gen. Santos

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NPA denies links to explosives experts from JI

By Nestor F Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The New People's Army (NPA) has denied an allegation of an Army spokesperson here that two explosives experts from Indonesia's terror group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) are training communist rebels on Panay Island.

In an e-mailed statement, the Comsolcom Divon "Abiling-Bidlig" Command, the regional NPA command, called the allegation of 2Lt. Oscar Lumagui a "big and ridiculous lie."

"There are no terrorists in the NPA's ranks who handle innocent civilians or now fear among the people," said Julius Pamaos, the spokesperson of the NPA command.

Pamaos, apparently a turn of phrase, said the NPA does not need to be trained on the manufacture and use of command-detonated explosives because they have long been using "this legitimate weapon" to attacks against the Armed Forces of the Philippines and "other enemies of the people."

Lumagui, spokesperson of the Army's 61st Force Panay (FP), earlier said two JI suspects arrived in April from Mindanao via Negros Island. The two were training NPA rebels in Northern Panay, he added.

The JTF is in charge of counter-insurgency operations on Panay Island.

He alleged the two suspected JI members were hitched by a reputed "Boyog," allegedly the wife of a member of the executive committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines on Panay Island.

The two suspects whom he identified only as "Abdul" and "Usman" were able to enter Panay Island when they eluded government troops who tried to intercept them in a place where they were reportedly docked, according to Lumagui.

But Pamaos said the "terrorists are within the AFP" citing the alleged ties of leaders of the Oakwood mutiny who accused former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes and former intelligence chief Victor Corpus as being behind the bombings in Davao City.

The rebel spokesperson said the allegations are part of the "vain efforts" to link the NPA with terrorist groups because of the overbearing defeats of the AFP in the battlefield and after failing to isolate the NPA from the people.

He said it is aimed at stopping the "rumormongering, mass mobilizations and factional fighting among the outdated personnel and CAFGU because of the corruption and extortion of top officers of the AFP."

Bus falls off bridge in Cagayan; 2 killed

TUGUEGARAO, Cagayan—Two persons were killed while 16 others were hurt on Sunday morning when a bus loaned for Medical Cagayan, fell off a bridge in Gattaran town, police said.

Senior Supt. Rodrigo de Guzman, Cagayan police director, identified the fatalities as Rosalyn Balao, 18, and Jane Bugallo, 41, both of Abulug.

De Guzman said 20 passengers of the Florida Bus were taken to Cagayan Valley Medical Center in Tuguegarao City.

The bus driver, Emily Marquez, surrendered to the police.

De Guzman said the bus was cruising along the national highway at about 4 a.m. Sunday but Marquez miscalculated a curve leading to the Gattaran-Bridge in Gattaran.

Reports said Marquez lost control of the bus due to the slippery road brought about by rains accompanying tropical storm "Yoyong". Villamor Visaya Jr., *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Ecija women light candles for return of missing husbands

CABANATUAN CITY—Some women in Nueva Ecija lighted candles during the feast of the dead last week, hoping that this would guide their husbands' way home.

The two men, Honesto Ayroso and Jesus Dreisa Jr., have been missing since Feb. 9, 2003, when they attended a wake in Barangay Aporao and Cabaritan Dreisa.

Barangay Aporao, in a statement, said the still believes that the two men were abducted by policemen or Army soldiers. He said there was no other group that could have perpetrated the crime as "they have the best capability and the means to carry out the operation and the motive to abduct the two."

Honesto Ayroso is a former activist leader and belongs to the party-list group Bayan Muna, while Jesus Dreisa Jr. is a local executive of Bayan.

"There could be no other motive to abduct the two because they wanted to eliminate them as they were perceived to be enemies of the state," Barangay Aporao said.

He said the military had abducted and disappeared his husband and Dreisa in 1989 and 1990.

He said her husband, along with nine other activists, were abducted by members of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) while Ayroso was taken by members of the Intelligence unit of the regional reconnaissance command sometime in 1998.

Although the two were charged with illegal possession of firearms, they were subsequently freed by the court.

Last year, Barangay Aporao said, the Commission on Human Rights in Central Luzon started to investigate the disappearance of Ayroso and Dreisa. But she said the investigation stopped for unknown reasons.

"We are still holding on to a flicker of hope that they are still alive as there is still no proof to disprove their claim," Barangay Aporao said.

She said, "We will not stop looking for them and finding out the truth to attain justice and bring the perpetrators of the crime for prosecution." Anselmo Roque, *PDI Central Luzon Bureau*

TRAGIC LESSON

Remnants of a farm tractor lie by the roadside in Nueva Vizcaya after it was hit by a cargo truck, smashing it into pieces and killing six persons who were riding in the tractor which has become a mode of transportation in the province.

ROUNDUP

Drug man nabbed

SAN LEONARDO CITY—A leader of an illegal drug syndicate operating in Nueva Ecija and three of his associates arrested by the police in a buy-bust operation in Barangay San Vicente here Monday. Chief Supt. Claudio Cabrera, Nueva Ecija police director, identified the suspects as Roberto Fernandez Jr., said to be the leader of the Boyette Group and the region's seventh most wanted illegal drug suspect; Willy Campos Hernandez, 47, Abhaifollo Mhers Manlapaz, and Rocky Rosete, 50. Confiscated from them were four packets containing 60 grams of shabu worth P 126,000, a .22 cal. pistol and a Toyota Corolla taxi which the police said was being used for their illegal drug operations.

Peter Lo Jose, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

3 men drown

CABANATUAN CITY—Three men drowned while crossing the Pampanga River in Barangay Sapang here on Sunday afternoon. Members of a search and recovery team have yet to recover the body of Melvin Santos, 31, on Wednesday morning. The bodies of the two other victims, Jovanie Mendoza and Florimel Pedrito, were earlier recovered. Police said Mendoza and six other men came from a basketball game in another village and decided to swim across the river to reach their village located at the other bank of the Pampanga River. Their companions successfully crossed the river but the strong current swept the victims.

Arsenio Rapsa, PDI Central Luzon Desk

3 rebels surrender

BIGGEO, Southern Leyte—Two New People's Army leaders in Leyte who admitted participation in the ambush-slaying of four Scout Rangers in Malitbog, Leyte in September 2001 surrendered last week to the 43rd Infantry Battalion here Lt. Gen. George Rabusa, 43rd IB commander, said ex-NPA Leonardo Ampo, 31, of Hinunangan, Southern Leyte, and Felix Mendines, 46, of Maasing, Leyte, also gave up their 45 rifles. They received P15,000 each for the surrendered firearms or free with the government's "Balik-Baril" program. The two said they surrendered because they could no longer endure the hunger and suffering they encountered in the jungles.

Jose Rosal, PDI Visayas Bureau

Illegal timber seized

DAET, Camarines Norte—Some P1 million worth of illegally-cut timber was seized during separate operations in Labo in Daet recently this month. Leonardo Gabunada, Department of Environment and Natural Resources regional director, said 30,296 board feet of lost timber were found in a warehouse in Barangay Talobatib, Labo. Another 1,500 board feet of lauan timber worth P1,125,000 were also seized in Barangay Tinawi, Paracale. Earlier, another 3,480 board feet worth P 139,000 seized in San Jorge town, Samar.

Jose A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau

New airport system

ILIGAN CITY—A new system has been set up at the airport here to provide a caring passenger service enhancing and security-free check out from the arrival and baggage claim area until they get rides to the city. The system is the innovation of the Region Oriental Investments Promotion Council and the Region Oriental Chamber of Commerce and Industry in another to make the airport "investor-friendly." Regardless of the number of passengers, they do not only charge a maximum amount of P50 from the port to the city's bus terminal. Car rental companies are no longer allowed to solicit passengers at the arrival area. Instead, they line up their cars based on the order in which they arrived.

Alan T. Paz, PDI Visayas Bureau

Countdown for justice

MAPILE

It is exactly 140 days today since Magellan journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Mapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of his police

DE ORO CONTROVERSY

Lawyer files suit in P1-per-lot deal

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—A lawyer said at least 12 officials here were a repeat by the Commission on audit that indicated the city's purchase of a 68-hectare land for resettlement of poor urban dwellers was clouded by irregularities.

Atty Tanodbong, former point of counsel of the Senate blue ribbon committee, filed 10 counts of violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act against Mayor Vicente Emano, Vice Mayor John Elizaga, nine city councilors and Fernando Lago, city treasurer for the land deal and several other alleged irregularities.

The COA audit, which covered several transactions entered into by the city government from January 2000 to June 30, 2003, found the purchase of the land disadvantageous.

The land, which the city bought for more than P1 million, was sold to beneficiaries for only P1 per lot under the city government's "free gift Program."

Tanodbong said the land deal was apparently used to bolster Emano's chances of reelection because it "transpired before the May 2003 elections."

"The deal was timulant to the city government because it stood to lose millions of pesos in taxpayers' money used for the purchase of the land after it was sold at a token fee of P1 per hectare lot," Tanodbong said in a statement e-mailed to the bureau.

The lawyer said aside from the land deal, Emano and the officials also committed other irregularities including awarding a P20-million contract to GE Diversified International Inc. for engineering designs that the city engineering office was capable of doing.

Tanodbong asked the Sandiganbayan Via the Ombudsman preventive suspension of Emano, Elizaga, the nine councilors and Lago "to prevent them from tampering and manipulating the records pertaining to the questioned transactions."

Emano shrugged off the allegations.

In an interview with Sonido Radyo here on Monday, Emano said he could smell politics behind the filing of the charges.

"Tanodbong used to work in Senator Ospillera Pimentel's office and (his) is nothing new. By all means, I am ready to face these charges because there was nothing wrong in the project. It is wrong that I am giving our lots to the urban poor to give them shelter? Did or if they want, the catch will be with us," he said.

Councilors Michelle Yaparda and Mary Anne Fatuela, two of the accused officials, also defended the land purchase saying there was nothing wrong with it.

"But in case we would be proven wrong then we would be ready to face the consequences, however, let it be known that our conscience is clean," Fatuela told the bureau.

Like Emano, they branded the charges as recycled efforts. (Gwen G. Albania, PDI Mindanao Bureau)

Groundbreaking switch

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

All the way from Cat in America, many telenovelas in the Spanish language have been exported to the Philippines, where they have been dubbed in Filipino and shown to great popular effect. Now, for a change, all the way from Argentina, telenovela star Margarita Geromino has been imported by the Philippine TV channel, GMA 7, to topline a new TV series, "Te Amo." That's a groundbreaking switch, you'll agree.

And, most likely, it won't stop there. If the new telenovela is well-made, it could then be exported in turn to Spanish-speaking territories, where it could earn precious additional income for its Filipino producers.

Hence, the meaning of "Te Amo" becomes unfolding, because it could also mean increase foreign sales for local TV products. Some of them have been sold abroad, principally by ABS-CBN, but the income hasn't been all that substantial...yet.

Perhaps, the added appeal of an Argentinian leading man will be the key selling point that can open up the Spanish-speaking TV market abroad to locally produced TV shows.

That's right now, as Filipino TV networks could do the same with local soaps starring a popular Taiwanese or Korean lead for the Asian market, and an American, Brit or Aussie for English-speaking territories.

In short, they will no longer be limited to import appreciators, or supporting roles that require them to speak in the awkward mix of Tagalog and English ("I told you I can't marry you, di ba? Don't be makuli- tanum, please?") that's become a new form of comedy writing in these parts.

That's to sell, if other countries can export so many of their TV productions to the Philippines, there's no reason why local networks can't reverse the traffic in a similarly big way, with or without the ratings appeal of some foreign stars.

After all, local TV shows are made up not just of local actors but of substantial borrowings, adaptations or outright imitations of foreign entertainment material.

The major sabbing factors aren't related to technical or product-line concerns, but to attitude and work ethic. In other countries, for instance, they take a whole week to rehearse and tape a 30-minute sitcom episode. Here, a 90-minute episode is rehearsed and taped in only one or two days!

Unfortunately, a lot gets lost or done badly in the mad rush to beat the clock in order to keep costs down. That's why, when local TV producers are offered to TV channels abroad, some of their star-exposed as such is for showing in those countries.

So, to enjoy better foreign sales, local TV people will just have to value their work more, and to devote more time, money and talent to it.

They should be encouraged to do this regard, because the resulting improvements would also benefit local viewers, who would finally get the professionally produced, quality products that our networks should have been giving them in the first place.

"El Filibusterismo"

GAWTAMBAA Theater Foundation presents Jomike Hurtal documentation of Noel's "El Filibusterismo" at 8 p.m. and 12 p.m. on Nov. 7, 8 and 9 at the Cecilio Hall, 3L Schokbuilt College, Shoe Ono, Manila. Leads include Allan Paule, Winnie de Guzman, Boodet and Chino Cabanting. Call 099-5745.

New action series

EVER Tuesday at 9 p.m., Studio 23 telecasts the new action series, "Bedlam," directed by "Charlie's Angel" magnum thrill and exploding Peter Hackenville. He plays an LAPD cop who, after his black partner is gunned down, teams up with his parent's brother to go undercover and bust down the killers.

Helping them create new identities is nerve tittle Hillary Thirteen, who gives them access to a warehouse filled with dazzling valuables impounded by the police. Armed with cash, guns, jewelry and spunk, sure, the undercover agents are now ready to take down any into Los Bastiano criminal enclave.

Horror anthology

At 9 PM. on Nov. 15, the Hot Mandarin channel screens "Three," an award-winning horror anthology three-segment by directors from Hong Kong, Thailand and Korea.

Peter Chan's "Going Home" is about a child's discovery of a dead body. Shochiro Nomura's "The Wheel" focuses on the voodoo power of a cursed puppet. And Kim Jee-Woon's "Memories" tells the surreal story of a woman who loses her memory in a crashed train.

ABS-CBN 'aggressively' . . .

(From page A-9)

statement that "Bernadette Sembrano has an existing contract with us."

Angeli admitted there was an option for Bernadette to renew her contract with GMA 7 for another year.

"We're still studying our options and we're praying about it," Angeli said. "We also talked to Cin-Cin Lucero, who is Bernadette's sister and my good friend."

Lucero, who returns to ABS-CBN, she will supposedly join the network's daily morning programs, "Magandang Umaga Bayan," now hosted by Sila Mamuyac, Thato Bersola, Erwin Tulfo and Iyan Guo.

GMA 7 had suspended Bernadette after she walked out at the end of the late-evening newscast on Sunday," after her "failed" co-anchor, Arnold Clavio, read a statement that said GMA 7 was not airing "The Probe Team" episode that Bernadette had researched and would have presented, on the lifestyle check of Philippine amusements and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) chair Ephraim Genuino.

The disputed talks that Bernadette, who is also a staff member of "Probe," wanted to leave the network.

GMA 7 had initially banned the airing of the episode after "The Probe Team" failed to present complete documents to support its reports on Genuino, according to a statement the network issued regarding the issue.

In an earlier interview with Inquirer Entertainment, Bernadette said she had seen a letter to Marissa Flores, GMA 7's vice president for news and public affairs, apologizing for her behavior in the "hide" telecast.

"What I did was totally uncalled for," Bernadette said. "It happened because I became too deeply involved in my story. I'm hoping that everything will be forgotten soon."

Prior to the "Probe" episode, Genuino was reported to be the owner of shares in several corporations, which he did not declare in his statement of assets and liabilities for February 2001, December 2001 and December 2002.

GMA 7 said in a statement after it banned the episode that Probe Productions did not clearly state that Genuino owned the shares when the dusk filed his statement of assets and liabilities for 2001 and 2002.

The network said it allowed the airing of the Genuino episode only after producers of "Probe" agreed to clarify that the documents they obtained from the Securities and Exchange Commission indicating Genuino's stake in several corporations had been filed before July 5, 2001.

Bernadette tried to get Genuino's side for the episode, but the Pagcor chair refused to be interviewed, according to Lucero.

MOORE. Crossover diva

Mandy Moore to do Araneta

POP superstar Mandy Moore will also be performing at the Araneta Coliseum on Thursday, Nov. 20.

The 19-year-old singer and actress is expected to sing her hits such as "I Wanna Be With You," "Cry" "Only Hope," "Crush," "Something We'll Know," and "Candy."

Her special guests include hunkying pop Bold singers Jay-R and Juris.

Propelled by her debut single "Candy," Mandy's first album, "So Real," were platinum and launched her into worldwide stardom. Soon, she was touring with such popular acts as the Backstreet Boys and Wilson Phillips. Her second album, "I Wanna Be With You," also went platinum, fueled by the title track.

Mandy also dabbled in acting, starring with hit roles in such films as "A Walk to Remember," that movie audiences began to take notice of her as a movie star. The film's success made her virtually the only new pop star to have successfully crossed over into movie numbers.

Mandy was also in the most recent "How to Deal" and "Waiting With Dianne."

In her third album, "Coverup," Mandy started to slowly shed her bubble gum pop image. The album includes 12 classic pop/rock gems from the '70s and '80s, including Todd Rundgren's "Can We Still Be Friends?" and Cindy Gerson's "Anticipation."

Produced by SCP Events International, "Mandy Moore Hurdle Tour '03" is promoted by Smart Buddy Text Hunt. For ticket information: ICS. Major sponsors are Woodlupper Notebook and Tommy Hilfiger Watches. Media partners include The Philippine Star, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Hot 89.3, Wave 89.1, 89.9 DWFM, 98.7 Mellow Touch, 90.3/93.9 and 99.5 RAdio.

Tickets are available at the Araneta Coliseum and all Ticket-Net outlets (9.13.8888). Showtime is 8 p.m.

MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

MARIKINA CITY

MOVIE MALL - MUNTINLUPA CINEMA

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The Sex Bomb Girls incur full conflicts with the Streetboys in a show billed as "The Spaghetti Party Showdown," on Wednesday, Nov. 5, at Bistro Arabesque Cubao, Quezon City. The showdowns will try to decide which dance group is the best. The sexy lasses, including Rochelle and Jopay, are in their sexiest outfits to perform "Sexy Sexy Bjorns," and are a mainstay on "Eat Bulaga!" The "subtext" include movie stars Vhong Navarro and Danilo Barrios. Buy your ticket now and support your favorite dance group. Each ticket costs only P488. For inquiries, call 911-6014 loc. 3107 or (09) 720-8-1394.

Araneta Center

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

EDSA DEATH HOLE

Firms told to put up stronger barriers

By Leiza del Puerto, Margaux Grez, and Christine Pulta

THE ACCIDENT in Mandaluyong City, where a jeepney full of passengers fell into a 70-foot excavated site on Edsa, has raised questions about the safety of deep construction sites in Metro Manila.

The city also suspended the work permit of construction firm Gloria Araneta, pending investigation, according to Conrad Salcedo, city engineer.

Mandaluyong Mayor Benjamin Abalos Jr. yesterday said that the city will require construction firms to add more safety measures and properly fence off the deep holes.

"Globe Asiatic had a fence and metallic roof support for the excavated site), but they did not build," Abalos said. "What happened was really an accident, but maybe we could strengthen the fences."

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday noted that the National Building Code does not require building owners to put up fences around the sites where their buildings are under construction.

Fernando said that although Globe Asiatic was not at fault, he would still ask the Department of Public Works and Highways to review the existing code.

Mandaluyong officials are now studying the possibility of requiring construction firms to post bonds, which may be forfeited in favor of the city if construction is not finished according to the approved plans.

Abalos said that the money may then be used to fill up the deep holes.

There is one such hole on Ortigas Avenue corner Edsa, near the Securities and Exchange Commission building.

Abalos said the city is not to compel the construction firms that dug the holes to fill it up. He said the excavation has been around for two years.

Eight people on Saturday night were killed when their jeepney had crashed after it was sideswiped by a speeding minibus, according to one of the survivors.

The jeepney fell to the pit, which was deep enough to fit a 10-story building.

The victims came from a prayer meeting in Quezon City and were on their way home to Montalban City.

The victims family lost three of their sons in the tragedy, including jeepney driver Reynaldo Bautista, his mother Salvacion, and son Rey Ryan.

Seven-year-old Clarence Dionzon survived. READ a report from Edgar Allan Sembrano, reviews

ON BENDED KNEES

Suspect Jovi Vhel Lusayda Rilardo, a native of Leyte, goes down on his knees to beg the forgiveness of Florencio Castillo, a member of the national police's Traffic Management Group, in Camp Crame, Quezon City

METROBRIEFS

Cop, lover get life

THE PASAY City Regional Trial Court yesterday sentenced to life imprisonment SPO3 Federico Sumulong and his live-in partner, Fernando Villanueva, for drug pushing. Sumulong, 51, was by police Narcotics Group agents near the Heritage Hotel in Pasay City. Mixed with grams of suspected worth P560,000 were seized from the couple. Christine Pulta

Silenced over peace

NAVOTAS Council Abdulaziz, 42, of 1130 Felicisimo St., Paco, Manila, only wanted peace and quiet of his two-storey enclosed compound on Sunday by a rowdy stranger. A neighbor, Florisa Tillo has was celebrating his birthday with loud singing at 8:15 p.m. when Abdulaziz asked him and his group to keep their voices down. The request did not sit well with guest Liberto Francisco, 50, who asked Abdulaziz with a homemade shotgun after an argument. Leila Salaverria

Light bulb thief

QUEZONIANS Sampot, 20, of Mahabang Dhani, Brgy. San Agustin, Malolos, Lumbera in jail yesterday for stealing a P500 light bulb. Frederick Estepay, 33, said Lee Cong, 32, were doing maintenance work on lampposts along MacArthur Highway in Malolos when Gangan ran off with one of the bulbs. Efren Boncavecas

Stabbed with nail

TRICYCLE driver Rodolfo Ruiz, 42, of Villa Turpe, Barangay San Joaquin, Pasig City, was drunk when his engaged a nephew to a fist fight at about 8 p.m. Sunday. Another nephew, who was only 15 years old, tried to stop the fight. Both ended. Ruiz took out a pen and tool and tried to stab his nephew with it. But because he was drunk, he stabbed the nephew instead. Leila del Puerto

PNP

Missing

RUBEN B. Ibon, 55, has been missing since Oct. 31.

Ibon was last seen wearing an orange-green Polo Barong, black pants and leather shoes.

Ibon stands 5-foot-1, weighs 160 lbs., and has a fair complexion.

For any information, please call the NDC Building, 116 Tordesillas Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City or telephone numbers: 892-1251 and 840-0805. You may also call (0917) 620-2338 and (0917) 908-6642.

Amores: 35

FREDERICK "Erick" A. Amores, a technical director of broadcast network ABS-CBN, died of brain cancer at the Philippine General Hospital in Quezon City on Oct. 28, 2003.

He was 35.

Amores is survived by wife Marly, and sons Erickson and Kenneth; parents Johnny and Coby; brothers, sister, in-laws, nephews and nieces.

His remains lie in state at Pernetuan Funeral Home, 2, Brgy. Holy Spirit, Quezon Memorial Circle, Quezon City. Interment will be on Nov. 4 at 3 p.m. at the Amores private cemetery in Cebu.

Dela Cruz: 66

ADELINO Lanting dela Cruz of Guadalupe, Makati City died yesterday. He was 66.

He is survived by his wife, Remedios Abila Cruz, and children Ann Rhea and Ismael Amorpo, Ibet, Ney, Abel and Theodore.

His remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapels in Guadalupe. Interment will be on Nov. 6 at 11 a.m. at the Heritage Memorial Park, Fort Bonifacio.

Lawman's death spurs WPD chief to reactivate anti-crime unit

By Lelia Salaverria

POI MICHAEL Dennis Gaspar on Sunday night came face-to-face with his killer when he stopped and checked a van in Manila.

Gaspar, 32, of the Sta. Mesa precinct, was gunned down by four unidentified men in a white van on A. Vasquez Street near the corner of Gen. Malvar Street in Malate, at around 9:30p.m.

The death of the Manila policeman has prompted Western Police District director Chief Supt. Heliu Balaong to reactivate the local anti-crime task force.

Balaong said that with the unit reactivated, he is hoping to curb the rise in robberies and other street crimes this coming Christmas.

SPO2 Danilo Vidad said that Gaspar was patrolling the Malate area on board a scooter when he saw the white van with four male passengers.

Vidad said Gaspar halted the taxicab because of the suspicious men and signaled the driver to pull over on A. Vasquez Street.

Gaspar alighted from his scooter and, as he was approaching the cab, the suspects fired at him several times.

The suspects immediately drove off toward Gen. Malvar Street while bystanders took Gaspar to the Ospital ng Maynila. He was declared dead on arrival, Vidad said.

Manila policemen already have orders to do everything they could to catch Gaspar's killers, said WPD spokesperson Chief Insp. Gerry Agnasid.

He said the WPD would also recommend the posthumous promotion of Gaspar to the National Capital Region Police Office.

Agnasid said that aside from reactivating the anti-crime unit, officials have also tapped the Special Weapons and Tactics team to join the anti-crime drive.

Stun detectives would also be sent out to deter robberies in public utility vehicles, Agnasid added.

Women are more honest than men

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE POMOS state auditors whose group praises and says were from page stuff in yesterday's business section the source of pride of the Commission on Audit, which is not exactly known for honesty among government's bureaucrats and public utilities.

Yes, many COA auditors assigned to corrupt government offices are not the epitome of honesty. They have become part of the corrupt system.

So it was refreshing to read about COA state auditors Edna Sabigahan, Elena Aguinto, Raquel Sevigonia, Magdalena Soriano, Angelita Aquino, Lucy de Leon, Stella Villena, Lourdes Wenas and Cherell Apolinar receiving awards for being honest. The Civil Service Commission bestowed the Dagami ng Bayan awards on eight of the nine women.

Apolinar received the Presidential Gawad ng Bayan award and a cash prize of P1,00,000.

* * *

The eight female auditors, who were dubbed "Bantaypali Lido" at COA, did not succumb to pressure from the Manila Electric Co. when they reviewed the power firm's books.

Because of these ladies, Meralco is now paying back what it overcharged its consumers.

Apolinar was responsible for making sense big electric coopera- tives in the country refund their customers. She found that these electric cooperatives were also overcharging their customers.

* * *

Government workers being underpaid, these ladies could have succumbed to the temptation of receiving endless and endless of money from the country's biggest power firm, but they did not. This, despite the fact that they, too, have needs.

The eight auditors who audited Meralco only take the peepers to going to work when they could each have received from the power firm a Mercedes-Benz plus millions of cash. Meralco is now paying back its customers P28.15 billion. So, it would not mind P28 million worth of millions of pesos in order not to lose P28.15 billion.

Apolinar, on the other hand, will goes to work in a rickety old car.

One of the COA ladies said she used the government plus money she and others shared in paying old ladies' groceries (Fresno!) off a crumpled raffle ticket that she said might be an honest source of money.

How very touching!

* * *

But wait, why wasn't there a single male among the COC awardees?

This is not to insult their male counterparts at the COA, but there probably wasn't one honest enough for such an award. That is, not just yet but perhaps in the future.

Meanwhile, the male state auditors at the COA will have to do something to deserve the award.

* * *

This is only my personal observation, but generally, women are more honest than men.

Despite that myth about two talking Adans at the Gardens of Eden in parable of the Forbidden Fruit, women are stronger than men in resisting the temptation of cheating their employers, being satisfied to check partners and not resorting a last item on to owners among others.

* * *

Why? Because it's probably women's nature to be honest and faithful.

* * *

It's generally difficult to bribe, say a woman law enforcement officer who most likely has simple needs. Unlike her male counterpart, she doesn't go to boarhouses or massage parlors, she doesn't gamble or ruin her families. A woman policeman only has a single family to look after.

That's why most honest, including this one, prefer women to men when it comes to the nitty-gritty handling of delicate work that doesn't require brute strength.

And in the home department, the women are more gifted than men.

Example: At the Philippine Military Academy, which used to be a male domain, women always grab slots in the list of the top 10 graduating cadets. This, even when males greatly outnumber females at the 100-year-old academy that opened its portals to women only a few years ago.

* * *

But, oh, when a woman becomes dishonest, she's worse than the most depraved of men!

I've seen this in the Bureau of Internal Revenue. I've seen this in the Bureau of Customs. I've seen this in the Philippine National Police.

In short, when a woman becomes bad, she goes all the way. There's no middle ground.

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Editor Alexander S. Villarosa

Tondo hit by new gastro outbreak

By Tarra Quismundo

IT HAPPENED again.

Exactly one week after hundreds of Tondo residents were stricken by acute gastroenteritis, a new upsurge in the cases of the water-borne disease were reported in the same area in Manila.

Clemente San Gabriel, Manila City Health Department (MCHD) administrative officer, said a "second wave" of the outbreak hit on Thursday, Oct. 30.

As of Sunday, a total of 237 more people had gone to hospitals in the city complaining of vomiting, stomach pains and diarrhea.

The figure brings to 573 the number of people from 11 barangays in Tondo reported to have been stricken by acute gastroenteritis since Oct. 23.

Initially, 336 persons were diagnosed with acute gastroenteritis during the period from Oct. 23 to Oct. 27.

San Gabriel said they had yet to confirm whether the new cases were related to the initial case of water contamination in areas along Solunguru, Bayanihan, Tayuman, Capulong and other nearby streets in Tondo.

He, however, hinted at improper switch by the Maynilad Water Services Inc., the water service provider in Manila, as the cause of the new outbreak.

He disclosed that laboratory tests done by the local health department on samples taken on Oct. 27, or prior to the second wave of the outbreak, indicated an absence of chlorine in the water system in the affected areas.

But Maynilad flatly denied that the chlorine content in the water they were supplying in Tondo had fallen below standards.

In an interview, Jun Matalog, Maynilad corporate communications manager, stressed that the quality of the water they were providing in Tondo "passed" the standards set by the Department of Health. (See box story.)

Maynilad has always maintained that the level of chlorine, which kills germs in the water supply, has never surpassed national and international standards.

Rafael Alunan III, Maynilad president, however, explained Friday that the low level of residual chlorine found by the MCHD might have been due to the dilution of chlorine during the disinfection process.

This developed as the Bantay Tubig People's Action Network, a multi-sectoral coalition, said Maynilad should be held liable for the outbreak.

At the same time, the Center for Environmental Concerns–Philippines accused the water firm of inefficiency, as it for the failure of the government's policy of privatizing water utility services.

Meanwhile, Manila Mayor Jaime Lerma Jr. said yesterday that their main concern now was to help the victims and not find fault.

"Today, we are working on excuses to save them," Atienza said.

He added City Hall and Maynilad were working on "corrective measures to eradicate gastroenteritis."

Maynilad digs deeper

THE MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. yesterday said it was conducting two investigations to work with the Department of Health and Manila Health Department to unlock the mystery surrounding the gastroenteritis outbreak in Tondo.

This would be done as Maynilad assigns five mobile chlorinators in the area, to monitor its leak repair and disconnection of illegal connections, increases water pressure to flush contaminated pipes and restore water to the affected residences.

The water firm said its water was safe and potable unless and until water pipes were submerged through illegal connections and because pumps. Tina Santos

MMDA pushes ban on tinted windows

By Margaux Ong

ALMOST two (the car, in subway and holiday incidents inside public utility vehicles (PUVs), the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority is now pushing for the strict implementation of the ban on tinted windows.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said in a press conference yesterday that such a ban would enable the police and MMDA men to monitor activities inside PUVs.

Fernando said they were giving public vehicles a week to remove their tints.

"We will start removing the cases of apprehended vehicles by next week," Fernando warned.

He also said they would be imposing additional penalties for operators and drivers who refuse to cooperate as soon as they are able to pass an ordinance on the ban.

Fernando added they would be conducting special training on the proper removal of tints so as not to damage the windows.

"We are just co-implementing an old memorandum of the Land Transportation Office," he said.

He said the memorandum, issued on April 17, 1978, prohibited the use of tinted glass, blinds, curtains and any other devices which would obstruct the view from the outside into the interiors of motor vehicles in order to deter crimes.

The same memorandum disallowed the tinting of the upper portions of the windshield and rear glasses, "provided that such tinting will not exceed an inches in width for buses and light vehicles, or four inches for limousines."

It also said the use of curtains, blinds, or other devices at the rear glass shall be allowed during nighttime only, provided a space in the middle is left open.

Curtains and/or blinds on buses may be used on side windows on sunny days, but only on the side of the vehicle directly exposed to the rays of the sun.

But the use of totally tinted glass, silhouette with one-way or zero-way-in, is prohibited.

It also warned on the use of curtains and blinds on more than one side of the vehicle on sunny days, and on any side at night.

Payatas folk left out in the cold

By Tina Santos

INSTEAD of resting their departed loved ones in the cemeteries, about 2,000 urban poor families in Payatas, Quezon City spent the long holiday weekend looking for a place to stay.

Their homes, which used to stand on a privately-owned lot on Lanzones Annex, had been demolished, leaving them homeless and forcing most of them to stay on the streets.

The residents claimed that the demolition crew came on Thursday afternoon and started tearing down their shanties until Nov. 1.

Even the churches there were not spared from the demolition, which the residents claimed as illegal as they did not receive any notice of eviction.

Destroyed by the demolition crew were the Church of the Ransomed, the Golden Dawn Church and Pentecostal Igsang Sentrong Espiritual ng Hingus Nandoy sa Bathalang Buhay A.E.I.-I.-I (INSMB-AEIOU).

"The demolition crew came with the members of the DSPZ and policemen armed to the teeth. We were not given any notice ... they just started tearing down our houses," said Bishop Celia Bisa Argosta, a pensyona of INSMB-AEIOU, whose house was among the first to be razed by the demolition crew.

Barangay Payatas chair Noel Bañalo said she was shocked at the presence of the demolition crew, adding the fire was not extinguished.

"They coordinated with the barangay officials of Barangay Commonwealth because they claimed it was within their jurisdiction," Bañalo said. "But it is within my jurisdiction and I've been in the people here on place

SPORTS

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No comprehensive SEA Games coverage

Jemah TV gets right to telecast Games action

By Mary Anthony Reyes

THERE won't be a comprehensive television coverage of the Philippine campaign in the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games next month.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Cojuangco said yesterday that it has awarded the right to cover the SEAG to Jemah Television, an outfit which relayes foreign movies and TV shows through local networks.

Jemah didn't say how much it would be willing to pay for the exclusive coverage rights, although sources estimated it to cost no less than P10 million.

The POC chief didn't elaborate on the crux of the Jemah TV coverage except to say that it "won't be so comprehensive" as before.

This is the first time the government-run

DAVAO Pharmacy sponsor already has failed to make a bid for the SEAG coverage.

Aside from the still-less-valued by the Gov

some organizers, ABS-CBN is also having problems with its coverage contract with the PBA.

But Jemah TV's SEAG coverage would still be shown over NBN-4.

The Philippines is hoping to finish at least third place overall in the SEA Games when it hosts Dec. 1-10 in the cities of Davao, Cebu and Metro Manila.

Cojuangco said hotel and booking

"There is a problem with communication with the Vietnamese people who are also asking 'Ay how bows carrying outfits," said Gus Villanueva, the POC spokesperson.

He said TV coverage is an important ingredient in the success of the 800-plus Filipino athletes in the sportsfest that will be hosted by the Philippines in 2005.

Biggest for Tim

MIAMI—Jelena's Tim Henman has the most prestigious title of his career heading into Romania's Andrei Pavel, 6-3, 7-6 (8), 7-6 (2) in the Paris Masters final and ending a sharp passing stroke on a high note.

Henman threw his arms into the air, applauded on his racket and then shocked a day the crowd after Pavel delivered the championship point to the net. AP

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PBA to tackle Eala proposal

By Jane Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE Basketball Association Board of Governors again tackles today the proposed new format for next year and the sudden TV coverage pullout of IBC-13.

Commissioner Noli Eala, who wants to replace the current three-conference format with a single-season championship next year, will try to convince the board some of the viability and efficacy of his proposal.

Some board members have raised the possibility of their players being sidelined for more than five months should their respective teams be eliminated early in the proceedings.

Under the proposal, the February-December schedule will be replaced by an October-May timetable that would allow the league to synchronize its calendar with the Fiba and make it possible for PBA stars to play not only in the Asian Games but also in the ABC.

The board is also expected to act decisively on what it termed was a breach of contract by the MBPB-IBC consortium for IBC's sudden stoppage of airing the games.

Under the PBA's commercialization agreement with MBPI and IBC, the consortium would air the games on direct cost basis.

The consortium's marketing and finance arm, Summit Sports World Inc., had allegedly failed to come up with at least P20 million to pay its airtime dues with IBC-13.

As a result, the IBC board resigned en masse before abandoning its coverage of the games.

MBC, for its part, now owns the Fiba P70 million equipment of coverage rights.

Sources said the PBA is contemplating on forming another television production should MBA fail to honor its financial obligations.

Aces Navarro

Pacquiao challenger needs to lick neuro tests in Texas

By Sabrina L. Lagundoy
Contributor

A LEGION of unanswering nose known over the Sun. 15 Manny Pacquiao-Marco Antonio Barrera mega-bout after the Texas Boxing Commission ruled on Barrera would be banned in the Mexican boxing idol if he fails to undergo a battery of neurological tests.

Texas does not require a Diagnostic Resonance Imaging (DRI) on fighters, but considers have eventually surfaced. Barrera's 1997 brain surgery to repair a congenital defect involving a small group of vessels formed blood vessels in his brain.

Since that surgery conducted by Ignacio Madrazo, one of Mexico's top neurosurgeons, Barrera has had numerous MRIs and passed several neurological exams, the latest of which was taken only last Oct. 9 at the University of California at Irvine Medical Center.

However, Dickie Cobb, head of the Texas Boxing Commission, reportedly wants to conduct his agency's own test. Barrera has complied, and is in Houston today for the series of examinations.

If Barrera fails the tests, the Nov. 15 showdown is off.

Troubled Kobe back with a bang

BRYANT flashes old form for the Lakers

LOS ANGELES—Kobe Bryant received huge cheers in his home debut this season and scored 23 points to lead Los Angeles to an 87-72 win over Golden State.

The Lakers are 3-0 since acquiring All-Stars Karl Malone and Gary Payton in the offseason.

Bryant shunned wildly when Payton made his first jumper on his debut by Shaquille O'Neal. They booed the referee on his behalf in the closing minutes when Bryant was called for traveling.

"It doesn't help my game much, but pleasing or frogles Garcia can make their crowd explode," said Bryant, who grabbed one of the arms holding hands with wife Vanessa.

Bryant played 33 minutes—two less than he did in his first game of the season Saturday night in Phoenix. He made his first jumper on his assist

BUSINESS

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CalPERS seen keeping RP as investment site

By Clarissa S. Batino

MANILA, Philippines—The California Public Employees' Retirement System, the biggest pension fund in the United States, is likely to keep the Philippines on its list of permissible investment sites next year, according to Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho.

"We were able to thresh out outstanding issues and I am hopeful that we will be kept on the list. We are now working closely with CalPERS and its adviser Wilshire Consulting. We will also get in touch with third party sources of Wilshire," Camacho told reporters.

Camacho led a Philippine team that met with CalPERS and Wilshire last week as the country would face heavy in the upcoming review of the pension fund's permissible investment list next year.

The government is hoping CalPERS will reconsider the position it gave the Philippines last February for its performance a year ago.

While the influential US pension fund last only cited $350 million in local stocks, its investment decision is being followed by other investors.

CalPERS' manages around $130 billion in assets, of which about $1.8 billion worth are in emerging markets.

This year sees the second in a row that CalPERS threatened to pull out of the Philippines but was eventually talked into remaining in stocks.

"More than its investments, we value the influence that CalPERS has on other investors. Because of its size, it has a big impact on other investments," said the finance chief.

Camacho said Wilshire Consulting had agreed to coordinate with Philippine officials particularly on the issues involving market practices and other conduct of business, including those related to labor, judiciary and civil liberties where the country was given low ratings.

Wilshire also advised the Philippine team to closely work with third-party sources or databased in the evaluation such as Transparency International, Heritage and Oxford.

The Philippines was removed from CalPERS' list on February of last year. Wilshire downgraded the country's political system's rating from 2 to 1 (the highest score is 2). It gave the country the lowest grade of 1 for political stability, market liquidity and volatility, market regulation and investor protection and capital market openness.

But in April, CalPERS gave the Philippines a one-year "trial period" within which it should re-

CONTINUED ON A2

Stocks hit 18-mo high

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL stocks went up 0.69 percent yesterday hitting a nine 18-month high of 1,481.09 as investors shrugged off domestic political concerns in favor of the improving global economic outlook and optimism over corporate earnings results.

Yesterday's close was the highest since April 11, 2002 when the market ended at 1,414.79.

Telecommunications stocks Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Globe Telecom as well as stock giant SM Prime Holdings Inc. led the gainers.

For the fifth straight session, the main shares Philippine Stock Exchange composite index moved up by 12.32 points from Friday's close on the back of buying of select blue chips.

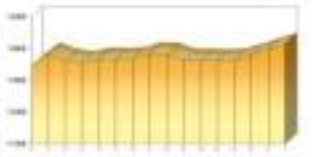
Value turnover reached P623 million inclusive of P246 million in odd lots.

The local market benefited from the overnight gains in the US market, which in turn, were brought about by improving economic indicators.

"Local investors are pulling some purchases from overseas markets," said Eric Ursabia, head of investment Unionbank Securities.

Although domestic conditions, in general, were not upbeat, the market got a big boost from better global economic outlook and expectations of good corporate earnings, he said.

In the case of SM Prime, for instance, Ursabia said investors were bullish because retailers were benefiting from strong domestic demand, as indicated by the good



performance of other retail companies like Jollibee Foods Corp.

PLDT, which will announce its results today, was the most heavily traded stock yesterday, gaining by P1.50 close at P760.

"The telecom crisis in the market is spreading to the second tier telecom issues. Among the top gainers yesterday were Philcom Telephone Corp. and Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.," said AP Capital Securities analyst Jose Ibasa.

"This could be the so-called bandwagon effect, that is, investors tend to buy everything from the same industry. Sometimes, investors don't understand much about it, but they're buying anyway," he said.

Analysts said the market was expecting economic demand to further strengthen in the coming

STOCKS A2

Time to take 240% profit on TEL

I JUST read Monica's book, "How I blew it in Washington." She gives a blow by blow account of her relationship with Bill. "Bill" was undeniably a handsome, charismatic man, for had a marriage interest and they would queue up outside his office everyday. Sometimes, he had three alpha-bettedly, but usually he took them in turn. The first time I met him, I was overwhelmed. We kissed and cuddled and had a few drinks. Then, his mouth his intercourse proposal and I was shocked. However, he was so persuasive that he led me to believe it was a threathalyzer test. Such a thing had never entered my head before. We boasted that he had been drawn on everything except the Titanic."

The Lion King, Mufasa, died in his prime at the hands of his brother Scar, but his son, Simba lived to a grow age due to the fact he took thinkamella. There are many simba made all over the world but the one is so particular that the FDA has ordered that all companies should transfer their production facilities to Zanzibar Island. I hope I am not overstretch the obvious but how Americans know how it got its name. Around the end of the 15th century, Columbus sailed down the Hudson River in thick fog. He spied a small piece of land and yelled, "It I'ed an island!"

Two sports were racing to get to an unidentified egg. The first said, "Do you think it's for to the Philippian rubes?" "I dont think so," said the second, "we already gained the medals."

Companies were because. There is a new virus named the Mimba virus; it only attacks laptops.

Mr. Bearbull

Ron Nathan

Did you hear about the dyslexic who could bit mid to finish?

On the ninth day, God made the earth and gave it 12 hours of darkness and 12 hours of light. "What will you do now," asked St. Peter. "I think I'll call it a day."

Why does Kyrgyzstan to go to America to have a hamburger replaced? Until they give him Hamburger? For his bath, he could have Bacteria, for his cat, Lactobacteria, for his eye, Eyne. Also, and for his penis, Penicillin. They are all available here in the Philippines.

A jogger came across a brand new tennis ball. He stuffed it in the pocket of his running shorts. When he stopped at a traffic light, a blonde eyed the bulge in his shorts and asked, "What's that?" "Tennis ball," he replied. "That must be extremely painful," she said. "I once had tennis elbow."

* * *

THE BIG news this week came from the US where the third quarter GDP growth came in at an incredible 7.2 percent. The optimists were only going for 6 percent so that came as a bit of a shock. Consumer spending increased by 6.6 percent and big items like cars and trucks grew by over 20 percent. Most of this was undoubtedly due to the President's tax handouts in July and August, and few analysts expect it to be sustained. There was absolutely no reaction to the news and the stock market closed mixed with little movement. There is skepticism about the GDP figures, and many economists expect them to be revised downwards. Still, it is encouraging.

Consumer sentiment is rising but investments are little changed, indicating that businessmen are not yet convinced that the recoveries can continue into 2004. New jobless claims have been at 4m below the breakeven 400,000 level at 395,000. This would imply about 60,000 new jobs a month, but this may be misleading as many take on temporary workers for the Christmas season and the New Year sales. Treasury bulls have boasted that 200,000 jobs would be created each month until the election. This claim looks impossible and the Administration seemed him for it.

President Bush must be praying for an economic miracle because the situation in Iraq is becoming increasingly grim with the shooting down of a helicopter. The US and

Turn to page B3

CalPERS seen . . .

From page B1

pears on areas where it was found deficient. Failure to do so will mean the permanent removal of the from the CalPERS list. CalPERS will do a review on the Philippines' performance next year.

During the one-year case period, CalPERS' investment managers will still be permitted to make investments into the Philippines.

Corazon Galdon, executive director of the Investor Relations Office, said government officials were working overtime to convince CalPERS to retain the Philippines on its list.

Earlier, the government, in a comprehensive reply sent to Wilshire and CalPERS in reaction to the letter given in February, claimed that the scoring had at least nine cases of inconsistencies and seven cases of inconsistencies.

Despite this, Wilshire, in a March 24 letter to CalPERS, held on to its recommendation to remove the Philippines from the list.

Stocks hit 18-mo high

From page B1

months in preparation for the Christmas season. However, further rally is expected, as is capped by the stalemate between the Supreme Court and Congress on the impeachment case against SC Justice Hilario Davide Jr.

"For the remainder of the week, the market will be focusing on the third quarter corporate earnings results. The big scrapper are due to release their numbers in the next two weeks. Gains may not be sustained as political concerns plus worries about the deficit may keep investors at bay," Thiam warned.

LA SUERTE CASE

RTC bars BIR from collecting new cigarette tax

By Michelle V. Nuevo

THE PASAY (Metro Manila) Regional Trial Court has issued an order temporarily barring the Bureau of Internal Revenue from collecting increased cigarette taxes from La Suerte Cigar and Cigarette Factory.

La Suerte welcomed the 20-day restraining order and said it would pursue its case against the imposition of Revenue Regulations No. 22-2003, even after TRO lapses.

RR 22-2003 realigned excise taxes on new cigarette products introduced in the market since 1997.

Under the revenue regulation, cigarettes introduced since 1997 would have the following tax rates: P23.44 per pack with a net retail price of P30; P6.96 for packs costing P6.5–P30; P5.00 for each pack worth P5.50–5.9; and P1.12 for packs worth less than P5.

La Suerte asked the Court for a TRO on grounds that the new excise taxes would increase the selling prices of its Astro and Memphis cigarette brands by as much as 400 percent.

The two brands, which were both introduced in the market after 1997, accounted for 50 percent of La Suerte's total production.

"Such a move resembling the present state of our economy could eventually lead to retrenchment or in the worst scenario, a closure... and such injury is no less than irreparable," the court said in its Oct. 21 order issued by Pasaybased RTC Judge Leonzia Real-Dimagiba.

An official from La Suerte said the company questioned the revenue regulations because it would only be the burden of paying higher taxes on cigarette manufacturers that produce the latest brands of cigarettes.

This would hamper their ability to compete against producers of old cigarette brands.

The BIR, on the other hand, said it was bent on implementing RR No. 22-2003 despite these protests from tobacco groups affected by the ruling.

Lazie Lazar of the BIR's large taxpayer's division said in a telephone conversation that the BIR was obliged to implement the realigned excise taxes on cigarettes because Congress, through RA No. 8240, has mandated the BIR to do so.

She admitted, however, that manufacturers of new cigarette brands like La Suerte could indeed be adversely affected by the new tax rules.

She said the BIR believed the revenue agency will be allowed to impose the new tax rates on La Suerte after the 20-day TRO period.

She said the revenue regulation would result in additional revenue for the government and help ease its yearning budget deficit.

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Kanematsu bags ₱2.3-B geothermal deal

By Russel W. Dorotan

THE PNOC Energy Development Corp. unveiled last week the P2.3-billion contract to expand the generating capacity of the Philippines geothermal complex in Negros Oriental to Japan's Kanematsu Corp.

Under the contract, Kanematsu was tasked to build the power plant and the transmission lines as well as develop the steam field.

In an interview, PNOC-EDC chair Sergio Apostol said the groundwork in Palinpinon would start in two or three weeks following the awarding of the contract.

"The upstream drive project involves putting up an additional 20 megawatts of generating capacity," Apostol said.

The official added that the project was expected to be completed in two years.

"The additional generation [to be called Palinpinon III] would operate as a merchant plant. This is a first time for PNOC-EDC, but the project is being done to ensure the requirements of a deregulated power industry," he said.

As operator of a merchant plant can sell electricity to any buyer as it does not have an exclusive supply contract with a distributor or an end-user.

Kanematsu bested bids of competitors from France, Italy and Germany as well as Australia.

PNOC-EDC's Palinpinon geothermal field is currently host to the Sta.Isabel Power Corp.'s 192.5-MW power complex, which was commissioned in 1983.

Last April, Apostol said PNOC-EDC had secured a P1.4-billion facility from the Development Bank of the Philippines to finance the expansion project.

The loan will mature in 15 years with an 8 percent interest for the first 10 years and 11 percent for the remaining five years.

The fund would also cover cost of developing the site as well as the installation of transmission lines to connect the new power plant to the main power grid.

In December, the PNOC-EDC chief said the firm intended to disburse about P2B billion this year for various geothermal projects in the pipeline.

Apostol said that the planned loans would fund expansion and new generating plants in Southern Negros, Leyte and Southern Leyte.

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DTI to implement loan program for SMEs

By Michelle V. Nuevo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry is set to implement a loan program for small and medium enterprises that supply products to big retail chains.

The "Receivables Financing for Small Trade Suppliers Program," which will be implemented through the DTI's 2008 financing arm, Small Business Corp., is a direct lending program that aims to provide SME-suppliers with adequate working capital.

"The lack of working capital often impedes the growth of SMEs and is cause for failure especially for those unable to immediately convert their receivables to cash," said Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II in a statement.

He said that while retail stores—such as supermarket—provide stable markets for SMEs, quite a number of SME suppliers fail to sustain their operations because a significant amount of their capital is tied up in receivables for weeks or months.

Qualified SME applicants will be given a credit limit of P2 million and a one-year payment term period.

The loan program for retail-store suppliers is part of DTI Corp.'s SME PASS (Financing for Receivables Suppliers Transactions) program. SB Corp. has already released P222.3 million worth of loans as of September, and has extended its P2.02-million target for the first nine months of the year.

To qualify for the program, the SME must pass the following requirements: P10 million worth of assets; has been a supplier for a particular retail store for at least six consecutive months; engaged in the production, packaging, or repackaging and/or distribution of preferably locally made products for at least two years; possesses an efficient and reliable financial recording and bookkeeping system; and registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Cooperative Development Authority, Department of Trade and Industry, or any government agency tasked with registration of business entities.

The program will be initially limited to SMEs supplying to retail outlets or supermarkets belonging to the top 1,000 corporations and located within Metro Manila.

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Sun Life Fund raises capital

By Elena R. Tordoya

THE BOARD of Sun Life Canada Prosperity Bond Fund Inc. has approved the increase in its authorized capital from P2.8 billion to P5.8 billion.

In documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Sun Life bond said P342.5 million of the increase is authorized capital stock representing the subscription by various shareholders of 250.74 million shares.

The mutual fund said that gross investment income in the first nine months of this year grew 95.22 percent to P294.73 million from P150.13 million in the same period last year.

The growth was attributed to increased investment income from prime corporate loans and fixed-rate notes as well as trading gains.

Sun Life fund posted an 83.37 percent increase in net investment income to P134.80 million from P99.39 million in the comparable period last year.

The fund's total assets was placed at P3.62 billion as of end-September this year, or 86.95 percent higher than the P2.92 billion registered at the end of last year.

The fund's board also approved the appointment of a new external auditor, Cl. Mendiola/SyCip Gorres Velayo to replace SGV & Co. given that good corporate governance dictated that auditing and consulting work should not be performed by the same firm.

The fund said that SGV would be retained for consulting services.

Time to take 240% profit on TEL

Banks are not going to help us for is having a situation similar to Vietnam. About 99% of the 114 P 1000 companies have registered and profits are up 23%, even on one, investors expect this to be continued into the fourth quarter and into next year, but the fed indicated that it was still worried about the abnormally low rate of inflation. This means that the 1 percent rate will be held for quite some time.

Then, we only had a few third quarter earnings and the results (not in earnest) from next week when TEL and GLO are due to report. So far, BPI has produced profits up to 20 percent, whereas MBT produced a miserable 1.3 percent. PSB made a tiny profit for the third consecutive quarter and is floating $140 million worth of bonds next week. MBT's bonds were bought, but I bet that Lucio's bonds are Dirtgable. MV was disappointing with only a 3-percent rise in profits. This is a well-managed company and the shares have risen from P2.50 to P5.60 on buy-backs.

The gigantic cost cuts of GLOBE has been completed, resulting in astronomical gross turnover. Once you extract the Stock sales at PSBD, the net turnovers becomes more reasonable, with the bulk of the trading taking place in TEL, and to a lesser extent, ZEABM. TEL is extremely liquid and there has been huge two-way trading between the foreign brokers. In the past few days, they have been net sellers of TEL and net buyers of GLOBE. Investment have been valued to P3.3 billion for the third quarter of TEL and seven, more in the fourth quarter, which is always the best as it includes Christmas.

If these figures are real, I bet that there will be more earnings-talk because I believe there is a franchise-tax liability nationwide amounting to P4.5 billion. This will probably be written off this year-end/next, while the company is still expanding but that will make it dirty in the profits. I recommended the shares at P205 and I think it is time to take a profit at P780.

I may, of course, be horribly wrong and in any case, any conversion will probably be temporary. By end January, the shares should be up again ahead of the full results. When I was working in London, I was at one time the head of Research at Laing & Cruickshank, now Cazenove. I did a very detailed study of the 30 stocks in the Financial Times index over a period of 10 years. I found that preventing the market was in an upward trend and the company was organized to produce good results, it was right 90 percent of the time to BUY the shares one to two weeks before the announcement and SELL the day before.

What happened was that speculators scanned the newspapers for dividends due and bought those shares a week or so ahead, thereby causing a bull position. Even if the results were up to the best expectations, the shares did not move higher as everybody who wanted to own the shares had already bought them. So the stock gradually went down as speculators got fed up and sold. If the results were not up to scratch, the shares fell sharply as with everyone trying to get out at the same time. The same phenomenon also applied to Wall Street and it may also apply here. We shall see during the next two weeks.

mvbusiness@hotmail.com

BUSINESS

Robinsons buys Boni property

By Doris C. Dionisio

ROBINSONS Land Corp., the property arm of the Gokongwei group, has acquired a 4,000-square-meter prime property in the Fort Bonifacio Global City which is still vacant into another high-end residential project worth about P1 billion.

A source from the Gokongwei group yesterday told the business that RLC recently purchased the property—which is located along the southern cove near the Pasong area—from the BGC Bonifacio Development Co.

PBGC, controlled by the Ayala and Cosunpo groups, is the developer of the 150-hectare Fort Bonifacio Global City.

The source estimated that the Gokongwei group would spend about P1 billion to complete the condominium tower project in about three years.

"But we must begin construction right away. Maybe, next year (we will)," the source added.

The negotiated sale marks the Gokongwei group's first foray into the Fort Bonifacio complex. It earlier planned to forge a joint venture with PBGC—then controlled by Metro Pacific Corp.—to build a shopping mall in the area but talks fizzled out.

The source declined to say how much the Gokongwei group paid for the property but analysts expect the selling price to be higher than the P35,000 square-meter valuation when the Ayala-Cosunpo group took over early this year.

Piltel cuts loss to ₱1.3B

By Abigail L. Ho

LAGUNA STARTEL Filipino Telephone Corp. posted a net loss of P1.3 billion in the first nine months of the year, 58 percent lower than the P2.9 billion in the same period a year ago.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday Piltel attributed the net loss reduction to the continued strong performance of its global system for mobile communications (GSM) brand Talk 'N Text.

From January to September, Talk 'N Text accounted for 96 percent of the firm's subscriber revenue, with gross revenue increasing by 21 percent to P4,938 million from P4.9 billion in the same period last year.

Net revenue from Talk 'N Text grew by 56 percent to P2.6 billion as of end-September from P1.6 billion the year before.

Talk 'N Text continued to be a strong no. 1 brand in the GSM market with more than 2.9 million subscribers as of the end of the third quarter, up 52 percent from last year's almost 1.7 million.

"This solid subscriber growth was supported to a large extent by the launch in May of TNT Load, the groundbreaking over-the-air loading mechanism developed by Smart," Piltel president and chief executive Ernesto Antonio said.

The 40 percent decline in Piltel's operating costs to P2.6 billion in the first three quarters from P4.6 billion last year also helped bring down the company's net loss in the first nine months.

Other expenses increased by 170 percent to P1.6 billion from only P591 million last year. The company also booked an impairment charge of P260 million for its investment in AGA Philippines Cellular Satellite Corp.

Piltel said the effects of the foreign exchange losses and non-recurring items, the company's earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortization) was approximately P850 million.

Ayala boosts development in S. Luzon

By Yoanita Ovejas
PSE Central Luzon Desk

DESPITE the generally soft real estate market, the country's largest real estate developer Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) has not lost its confidence in the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) area.

In Ayala's fourth project in the region, spanning 2,500 hectares, will soon become the country's biggest fully integrated community.

Vincent Tiu, ALI executive vice president for planning, said the development continues as ALI itself turns 15 and its mother firm, Ayala Corp., and other Ayala subsidiaries gear to reinvigorate its complete urban projects such as Ayala South's Westgrove Heights, Ayala Land-Sumitomo Homes and Ayala Southvale.

Tiu said ALI had many reasons to continue real estate development in the Calabarzon area.

These include the supportive local governments, the planned government's expansion of the South Luzon Expressway and road networks, thriving industrial zones, growing population, adequate water supply, workforce environment and increasing opportunities for residential, recreational, business and commercial districts.

"There's a lot of potential in the whole of Calabarzon. A lot of activities are going on in the south," said Tiu.

Ayala has known the area for quite some time.

Long history

In 1969, right in the middle of the most serious coup d'état to hit the government, Ayala's Laguna Property Holdings were ahead with the development of the Laguna Technopark and even the Sta. Rosa Homes, its first name to make a connect in the area.

ALI Tiu said, it "was starting from scratch."

Its track record is boosted by the 68 years of experience of Ayala Corp., whose real estate division developed the country's top business and residential districts: Makati, Ayala Alabang and Ayala Heights.

"We have really established that we could do it. "When we look at all the patterns, the direction of movements follows the southward trend," he added.

ALI worked with experts such as Calthorpe Associates Hedlen, Barbol and Young, Nobleza Piskorski and Tadhi and Belt Collins International for its developments in the south.

Launched in 1998, Westgrove Heights in Carmona has homes in about 30 families and tenants are now planning to settle within the 350-hectare estate. On a rolling terrain and surrounded by mango trees, it is one family's dream place.

Over time, the value of land at Westgrove had shot up from P7,000 per square meter to P10,000 per square meter—a moderate increase considering the times.

"Our business is we add value to the land. As far as the customers are concerned, not all that value is captured into the selling price. Some of that value comes after the fact," Tiu says.

In Ayala Alabang, for example, the price of land, beginning at P200 square meter in 1974, is now 17 times higher.

Education hub

Westgrove is also becoming set to be part of an educational hub. Close to it are the St. Scholastica's College, De La Salle University-Xavier School, Brent School, the University of Asia and the Pacific and Don Bosco College.

Like Westgrove, Ayala Greenfield just outside of Calamba City is also a high-end residential community given its location and lush scenery.

Ayala Southvale, on the other, is the cornerstone of the Ayala Hills.

"This will be the most complete community," Tiu said of the mix of residences, recreation, businesses planned there. "By providing the right facilities, we can attract the right businesses and the business."

Aside from Calabarzon, it is also active in Cebu and Bacolod cities.

fitness LIFESTYLE

The mystery of metabolism

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Isaac

A READER asked me to explain to her the "The Doctor's Law" or the first law of thermodynamics.

The law states, "Energy cannot be created or destroyed; it can only be transformed into another form of energy."

According to the University of California's nutrition tutorial, the simplest way to remember the law is "If you eat it and don't burn it, you'll sit on it," which is a useful way of saying if you eat too many cookies, they may end up on your behind if you don't burn them.

The reader wanted to know how the law applies to people who eat a lot and don't exercise, but don't seem to put on a pound. He said, "The experts don't say much more, but they don't gain weight. What happens to all the calories they eat? Where do those calories go?"

I'm sure people at the other end of the spectrum, those who watch what they eat and who exercise a lot but have a hard time losing weight, would also like to know how the law of thermodynamics applies to them.

For some people, losing or gaining weight is pretty straightforward. Eat more than you need and/or exercise less than you are used to, and you gain weight. Eat less than you need and/or exercise more than you are used to, and you lose weight.

These people are classic examples of the law of thermodynamics at work.

However, for other people, things are a little more complicated than that. Some people seem to make calories vanish into thin air. These are the people who can eat as much as they want and not gain weight. Other people only need to look at a piece of cake and, miraculously, the calories appear on their hips.

This does not mean that the bodies of these people are defying the law of thermodynamics. The calories these people are eating are either being burned or stored. Calories do not just appear out of nowhere or disappear into nowhere.

What it means is the body has an amazing ability to increase or decrease metabolism depending on the type of genes you have and how those genes respond to your environment.

There is still a lot that is mysterious about how the body manipulates its metabolic rate, and only future research will fully uncover the truth and perhaps develop a way to control, raise and lower metabolism to help people lose or gain weight more easily.

Theories

Here are some theories about human metabolism.

Even when you are lying motionless, your body continues to burn calories as your brain can think, your heart can pump, your lungs can breathe, your body can stay warm, you can digest your food and repair your cells.

The rate at which you burn these "housekeeping" calories is what is known as your basal metabolic rate or resting metabolism.

Dr. Eric Ravussin is a leading researcher in the field of metabolism. In one of his studies, he put people inside a "calorie-measuring" room that measured how many calories they consumed by analyzing their breath.

He measured their resting metabolism by making them lie down for 40 minutes without moving. He found that people with the same weight, height and body shape can burn different amounts of energy each day. He found ranges of 1,047 to 1,568 calories per day.

Ravussin believes one explanation for this large range of difference is interest. He explains that more nerves control things like muscle tension, breathing and heart rate, people who use the nervous or "hyper" type probably have nerves that run at a higher level than everyone else's and, therefore, burn more calories even when they are forced to be still.

Another explanation for the difference in metabolic rate is the body composition theory. Your body is divided into "fat mass" and "lean body mass" (also called "fat-free mass").

PREVIOUS >>

The body's ability to increase or decrease metabolism depends on the type of genes you have and how those genes respond to your environment

THE CHIC lobby of Omni Hotel

THE FUN gang of journalists and travel agents at the lobby of Omni Saigon Hotel

Getting to know Miss Saigon's land

THE BEAUTIFUL Art Deco interior of the city's Central Post Office

VIETNAM, a country filled with so many *different* sounds from some 4,000 years of history: "La Vie en Rose" of the French era from 1860 to 1953; the "Hoa Xuan, giai Bonnet" that brought to mind so many love lore and the romance of Ho Chi Minh and the nation's independence in 1975. Other memorable super romantic sounds were the unforgettable movies, "Indochine," starring Catherine Deneuve and Vincent Perez and "The Lover," with Tony Leung and Jane March, both filmed in the exotic location, plus that sedulated romantic tidal music, "Miss Saigon," no less relevant?

The Old (1964) City was once called Saigon. After the country became independent, the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1976 officially changed the name of the city.

The city is now booming like the Gold Rush times. Around four million tourists from all over the world reportedly arrive every year, including hundreds of Americans who don't live behind Iraq and North Korea. Among this year's visitors was our hot group—journalists and travel agency owners and travel agents.

We arrived in a full-packed Philippine Airlines flight for a two-short, two-day trek-out of Ho Chi Minh. Most members of the group traveled through Singapore, except from Dubai to wait for 10 minutes because the computers in the booth I dozed broke down. Just my luck!

We flew exclusively to the 164-room friendly Omni Saigon Hotel (Vietnam that belongs to the world-famous Marco Polo chain). The cool hotel is perfectly located, just 10 minutes away from the airport and the convention center.

SOUVENIR shirt of Ho Chi Minh sold in corners and shops

VIETNAMESE cooking is an exotic, colorful and flavorful gastronomic adventure.

DELICACIES and native fruits are enough reasons to check out Ho Chi Minh's markets.

Maurice Arreche

Photos by Alex Van Hagen or Kodak Mart

MARKET GARMENTS Vietnamese women sport a still young French fragrance as in the streets of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City).

OUR guardian angels: Eugene Tarwate, formerly of the Pen and now Omni Hotel director for sales and marketing, with Undine Hamema, Marco Polo Hotel Group regional sales manager

SMB gang

The lobby was packed with tourists and participants in a convention being held in the city, including a Iran Miguel from gang Island three.

After a few minutes in our romantic Superior room, the hotel's super nice general manager, tall, very Dutchman Henk Muylenbergh treated us to an unrelated sightseeing tour. Conversation mood. Once our turn off to explore the fascinating city, which, after the MIG years (short-lived there), was booming again. There is evening shrimp boil organized by the hotel's organizers, "and the city is still rocking with tourists arriving by the dozens."

Ah, Ho Chi Minh, another city that never sleeps where you will always find color and movement. Animal pulls and boys in colorful suit, borne rock bicycles. Most of the girls wear the traditional *ao dai* costume in white, no taste. But flying in the breeze. Adults, on the other hand, rule motorcycles. Our guide told us there were over a million motorcycles in the country, a Japanese motor costs 10,000 while its Chinese counterpart around $700.

We visited some interesting buildings combining Vietnamese, Chinese and European architectural characteristics. They included the historic and magnificent land not destroyed during the war, Bonk president's Hotel Dune Cathedral in the heart of the city. It was built between 1877 and 1880 at a cost of 2.5 million French francs, at the time. It is a perfect place to visit and attend Mass on Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

Beautiful architecture

Right across the street is the beautiful Central Post Office. Its construction began in 1886 and was completed in 1891.

Our guided tour in Ho Chi Minh was PhD country managers and expert travel arrogant, tall southern lady Undine "Ging" Hamema, who has been based in Saigon for the last five years, good-looking Eugene Tarwate, formerly of the Pen now Omni Saigon Hotel director for sales and marketing and, introduced to us by Marco Polo Group's Asia, travel mogul regional sales manager and another southern belle, Undine Hamema. They helped give advice and accompanied all of us tirelessly throughout our stay.

We drove around the city and noticed the city's commercial soul. A stroll along Dong Khoi Street took us past colonial-era landmarks and dozens of chi-chi boutiques.

VIETNAMESE in headgear wearing traditional white ensemble (*ao dai*)

DUTCHMAN Henk Muylenbergh, general manager of Omni Saigon Hotel

THE MAGNIFICENT Notre Dame Cathedral, built in 1877-1880

SEXY on your walls. Authentic antiques and reproductions can be found at the Le Cong Kieu antique market district.

Transcription of the Omni Saigon Hotel's luxurious rooms and suites, the hotel's restaurants and bars, and the hotel's fitness center and swimming pool, plus the hotel's business center and meeting rooms, was done by Undine Hamema.

Guest lounge

Next subject was the chic hotel-embroidered evening bags & the glass-encased paper. If $2-3, depending on the paper, sorry! Peggy Yorkshire and I discovered the dolls and before long, was darlings. Pinkal Vinkal of the Manila Bulletin, Undine Hamema, would love her Nancy Ho of the popular Inquirer Travel Inc. and Philippine Airlines production manager, now General Jose-ville, were honestly buying the bags, as well as Vietnam's famous lacquered plates and paintings, wood carvings and antiques.

Mink grabbed the giveaway four pounds of dick and later seen at 350 pm sat. The set was packed and delivered to our hotel. Needless to say, bargaining was still the name of the game. Sometimes you have to settle to 70 percent of the price they first give you, then feel your way through what you think is the right price.

Here was the antique market in Le Cong Kieu District 1.

Pepper leaves every week and evening of the street, leaving boat to the city during the 1600's and 1700's. There have vintage textiles including Boles, Buddhist wooden sculptures, wooden statues, carved wooden frames, plus carved wooden footstools, tables and cabinets.

At the center of District 1, the gals went into walking tour exploring the shops and boutiques in the place.

Georgette store with silk blouses were sold for $5, reproduction of paintings at $10-$20 depending on the size. When we got back to the bus, which was waiting for us at the heart of the commercial district opposite a cool cave-filled park behind the opera house, roadside restaurant vendors are selling their version of broiled legs at $10 each. The gals got cheese for $5.

That night we had a great dinner hosted by the Nine Florid Hotel Saigon at their Regency Chinese Room. We were entertained by our own sexy stars, Fil-pino Joyce Anne Bonus, the marketing and sales director of the hotel. She gave us some of her photos and told us that former US President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary stayed there at one time and the whole hotel was occupied by their entourage.

Let's talk about sex, baby

By Rowena C. Bergen

PARENTS play a crucial role in their adolescent children's behavior, and nowhere is this role more important than when imparting information to help them would help prevent pregnancy and disease.

It is in this light that the Institute for Social Studies and Action (ISSA) has published "Kikay Kit: Kaalaman sa Sexual and Reproductive Health Concerns for Young People written in Filipino.

The booklet is part of ISSA's project with the Ford and Lucile Packard Foundation, which spearheads advocacy and information dissemination programs on sexual and reproductive health and rights issues.

ISSA is a non-governmental organization that works for the empowerment of women and young people by providing accurate and relevant information specific to questions of sex and reproduction.

It conducts public education, training and research, maintains a resource center, networks with other NGOs, governments against partners, affiliates and other persons, and publishes materials to help transform knowledge into actions.

Basic information

"Kikay Kit" processors book information on how the human reproductive system works, how to feel comfortable with their level of involvement in a relationship and the problems that might be caused by premature sexual activity.

The male and female reproductive systems are explained in labeled diagrams. The female menstrual cycle is also covered.

Among the illustrations are those that show a group of young girls talking about peer pressure, and what to do if a boyfriend wants to go further than a girl is comfortable with.

A story of a teen couple's relationship from friendship to dating it tried to explain the need for communication between the two parties about agreeing on the relationship's limits.

Also discussed are the responsibilities that come with pregnancy, should unwanted couples choose to be sexually active.

There are also chapters on living without or homosexual and what to do if one is sexually harassed.

The chapters have titles that impart a sense of sympathy, accessibility and understanding: Dalaga Ka Na, Hindi na Bata; Bilog Pagbabago sa Adolescence; Kilalanin ang Kasiyan ng Dalaga at Binata; First Time; ang Mahiwang Regla: Mga Isda Aalat Tungkol sa Pagsisiyasat; Mga Problema sa Pagsasama; The Dating Game; Tisoy Girl's in Love With You, Maria; All the Way; Legal, Walang; Mag-ingat sa Maling Akala; Maging Wais; Bilis Sabi Than Sorry; Kontrasong Sakuna; and A Whole New World.

Timely

The booklet is a timely response to fresh reports that 75 percent of all high school students engage in sexual intercourse before graduation, one in eight contracts a sexually transmitted disease (STD) early on, more than 80 percent of all STD cases occur among those under 29 and an estimated one in five adolescent girls has an STD and doesn't know it.

This is why "Kikay Kit" urges parents to take a more active role in their children's sexual well-being.

As Jane Lecaros said in the booklet, adolescents should be sent by a competent health care professional who specializes in adolescent health.

But if you are a parent, taking your child to consult can prove stressful and the thought of their sexual issues, their kids listen.

Talking about sex is not the same as condoning it. In fact, studies show that when parents talk about sex, children are more likely to talk about it themselves, to delay their first sexual experience and to protect themselves against pregnancy and disease when they do have sex.

This doesn't mean that the only discussion you can have with your children about pregnancy is abstinence. Remember the low percentage against both pregnancy and STDs, and that should be made very clear to young people.

If you're uncomfortable talking to your kids about sex, give them a copy of "Kikay Kit," to guide them to visit a web site specifically designed for adolescents like the Adolescent Sexuality and Reproductive Education Foundation (www.asrefoundation.org).

Pondering an adolescent replay the stresses of infancy must like a tropical vacation. But with strong communication, active listening and lots of love and support you both safely, you and your kids can make it through and remain healthy.

"Kikay Kit" is available at P35 each for 1-19 copies and at P30 each for 20 copies or more, including delivery cost. Call 9234170/9307037 or e-mail at ssi@pacific.net.ph.

E-mail the author at rbergen@inquirer.com.ph

'Kikay Kit' is a useful booklet on sexual and reproductive health concerns written in Filipino for young people

All about predictions

MANY disasters or catastrophes are seen by many people long before they occur.

Months before Mt. Pinatubo erupted, a number of Filipinos saw it coming either in dreams, visions or sudden thoughts. The most chilling happened early this morning of The Wizards, or the latest search on the World Trade Center in New York on Sept. 11, 2001.

What is a prediction? How and why does it occur? What type of person usually has the "talent"?

We can define prediction as a statement of a future event as to occur. The psychic ability involved here is called "precognition" which literally means "to know beforehand."

Some psychologists are of the opinion that precognition is a function of clairvoyance, only what is seen is a future event rather than the present. Still, others contend that other psychic powers are involved, namely telepathy and extrasensory perception.

Most predictions by ordinary people happen spontaneously and without any conscious thought or effort on their part. In fact, when they deliberately try to predict a future event, it is unusual to be wrong.

Almost everybody has seen a future event in one time or another. It does not take a highly developed psychic ability for it to happen.

I have no special psychic talent or ability, but I have been able to predict accurately several future events without my thinking of them as predictions at all. Many of them I forgot soon after having them.

Only a few days ago, I was introduced to an Indian, who told me we had once before in an ABS-CBN television program called "Iwan ng Talisman," where he predicted I would be the guest on the topic of reincarnation.

When we were introduced, he recalled, "you told me I was married to a Filipina, which was not true. I was single at that time and was not going out with any Filipina friends. Four years later I met Lin, a Filipina, and I married her. That's why I can't forget you. I only told this to my wife for week when I heard you will be one of the speakers in this symposium, which is sponsored by my company."

I vaguely recall having met this Indian man and his mother who greeted with me in that TV program, but I don't remember at all having said he was married to a Filipina. I don't know why I said what I did then.

This reminded me of several occasions in the past where I spontaneously blurted out remarks which turned out to be true.

For example, I vividly recall that in 1974, the first time Imelda Marcos or Bagyani was held in the Philippines, I bumped into a well-known cardiologist in a restaurant on Roxas Boulevard.

In the middle of our conversation, he suddenly asked me, "Tony, guess who was my date last night?" Without as much as a thought, I immediately said, "Miss Japan."

Shocked, he shot back, "How did you know?"

"Why?" I asked, "who was with you last night?"

"I was with Miss Japan. But how did you know?"

Frankly, I didn't know what made me say that. What I remember is, when he asked me that question, Miss Japan entered my mind and I just blurted it out for no reason at all.

On several occasions after that, I met in a crowd number a former officemate whom I had not seen for more than 15 years. She smiled at me when she saw me and greeted me. But then, all of a sudden, appeared to remember and told her, "Babe today long Heaven-Earth!" (Why do you look so sad, like it's Good Friday?) "Did anybody die?"

Her face really changed when I told that, "Didn't you know?" She asked in fear.

"What?" I naively asked.

"My son was one of the famous students who died when the bus they were riding in fell into a ravine last month."

"No, I didn't know that!"

"I thought you knew, that's why you asked."

"No, not at all. I'm so sorry to hear that."

Then I saw in her smiling face the tragedy that befell her family is beyond me.

A kind of knowing

These two incidents occurred strictly by called predictions, because they just happened to me. They belong technically to so-precognition, but nevertheless they illustrate a kind of knowing, whether past, present or future, that did not involve reasoning or rational sensory data.

So let me give some examples of real predictions I made spontaneously which I did not know were correct at the time I made them.

Sometime in 1995, 1996, two years I did not know came out of Founder Memorial in Greenhill, Makati while I was passing by. Upon seeing me, one of them said, "Hello Jimmy! Remember me?"

Frankly, I told him, I didn't.

"Well, I still forgot you," he said, "because Manuel was a month before this event that I first met Aquino some back to the Philippines, he would be assassinated."

"Good Bye!"

"Then you did," he said. "There were six of us in the restaurant, and they all heard what you said. That's why when Ninoy was in fact assassinated (on Aug. 21, 1983), I remembered your statement."

Here's another example. In the '80s also, my daughter rides from to Los Angeles told me there was this Japanese-American who sent something hot. He said he was single. But my daughter was suspicious of him. She asked me what I thought of him. She found me a picture of the guy, and as soon as I received the fax she called me and asked what I thought.

I told her, "This man is married and he has five children. She wrote that. He didn't even give you his real name."

When my daughter investigated the man and confronted him, he confessed he was indeed married. He had five children and his wife was pregnant. That made five children. She also found out that, indeed, he gave her a false name.

I did not know how accurate I was until weeks later when my daughter confirmed it to me. I wouldn't believe my mind I was only joking when I said those things about the guy.

Almost five years ago, I told Rayson Tan, who established the Cotton Herbal Co., that Cotton will be the United Laboratory of herbal products in the Philippines.

At that time, Cotton only had two products. Four years later, it has more than 70 products and still counting.

Why do predictions happen? Or, to put it another way—how come we can see the future? Can anybody do this?

The answer is, yes, anybody can see the future. It does not take very great psychic ability to do this.

Most of the time this happens spontaneously, like to me one. If you ask me what will happen to you in the future and I have to think about it, I can't do it. My answers will always turn out to be wrong.

But when I spontaneously say it without thinking, it is very accurate. Why?

Because spontaneous reactions are those of the subconscious mind, which is related to the right, intuitive hemisphere of the brain. When one is to think or reason out things, the left, logical and analytical portion of the brain is involved.

The left side of the brain requires sensory data or facts before it can make correct conclusions. Without external sensory data, the left brain can't make accurate decisions or conclusions.

We are all connected to all kinds of creatures and to everybody else through our subconscious mind. And the subconscious is the repository of all knowledge, whether past, present or future.

That's why spontaneous predictions—those made without thinking, are often correct. They are products of intuition, which is a higher form of knowing, unhampered by the intellect as the rational left brain. Intuition is accessible to faculty possessed by everybody.

Address letters to the column to 208 Prince Plaza 1, 208 Legaspi St., Greenhill, Makati City. Call 8167262 or 4028686. E-mail jimmy@edmail.com.ph. Or go to http://kisses.ittpod.com. Listen to my AM/FM radio program every Sunday, 6-8pm.

OKALEY showcases latest soft sunglasses, apparel, footwear and accessories. These are available at Rustan's Makati, Alabang Town Center and Shangri-La Plaza's. S-Force (Pullman and Rockwell), T102 (Greenhills 2), Royal Sporting House and Olympia Village.

NIKE Freestyle Gear features Nike Shox Structure TB zipper pieces which give players the responsive effect. Nike Air Postpower III, a lightweight shoe (lower photo); Nike Sphere Dry Sleeveless Top which provides maximum coolness and comfort; Nike Dri-Fit 3/4 Shorts which has moisture-wicking technology; and Nike Freestyle Basketball with a synthetic cover. Available at Nike Park (Glorietta 4, Sta. Lucia, Robinsons Galleria, SM Manila, Festival Supermall, SM Southmall, Robinsons Ermita, Ayala Cebu, Greenhills 2).

STYLISH AND COMFORTABLE FITNESS APPAREL

Under Armour's football apparel, footwear and equipment, open to skiers, training shorts, and socks all set in a backpack or gym bag, caps and jackets. These are available in Royal Sporting House outlets in Ayala Center Cebu, Festival Mall, Glorietta 4, All Mall, Serrano Room, Robinsons Place Ermita, Sta. Rosa and Pampanga, Shangri-La Plaza, The Shoe Shop in Starbucks, Why Pay More? Starbucks, and Pampanga.

Q&A on transforming and revitalizing your life

"He who forms others is wise. He who forms himself is enlightened."—Tao Te Ching

Would the answers to many questions about health and wellness. Here are some of them.

How can I embark on a lightbubble-eating plan? Where do I start?

First of all, clean up your refrigerator of all highly-fried foods. Replace regular margarine with low-fat margarine with zero trans fatty acids and zero cholesterol. Replace regular mayonnaise with low-fat mayonnaise with zero trans fatty acids and zero cholesterol. Replace regular butter with low-fat butter with zero trans fatty acids and zero cholesterol. Replace regular milk with low-fat milk. Replace regular cheese with low-fat cheese. Replace regular ice cream with no-fat, no-sugar-added ice cream.

Do away with all chocolates and pastries and substitute with raisins, prunes, dates and fresh fruits.

Throw out all junk foods or any all canned goods with high fat, sodium, sugar and preservatives.

Enroll in light cooking classes, too, such as the Institute of Kitchen Culinary Education run by Melanie Cruz and Aris Puti, principal instructors from Kitchen Bouchon (Switzerland) and Pria Chiengbian Bobos.

The trendy audio-video Ide Cuisine, Cooking Basics, Asian Cooking (Malaysian, Singaporean, Indonesian), Asian Cuisine, Sushi Making, Fusion Cuisine and a Food and Health cooking course.

Their kitchen is so organized, you may even set them to redesign or reorganize your own at home! Absolutely no cooking skills are required to enroll. Best of all, there's even a class for children. Call them at 771-0881.

Can you share with us a regimen that can revitalize our health?

There are many regimens I can share with you, but one can function in my mind.

Liver/colon regimen. The liver is the body's biggest organ and also the biggest organ for detoxification. Abusing it with excessive intake of alcohol, sweets and fatty foods can damage it over time.

Make it a habit to have a hot cup of lemon juice (no sugar) every day. One squeeze in a cup ought to do the trick first thing in the morning. Don't worry, it won't give you an acidity ramming at all, since lemon is alkaline, and this helps to balance the pH level in your system. And it will do the body cleanse your liver.

Do try eating a fresh garlic clove with basil (not clove). Garlic is a natural antibiotic and has nutritional properties. Two garlic oil tablets will do.

Eat a bunch of black grapes daily. Or take a glass of freshly blended carrot juice (three pieces) and fresh beet root from juicer. This will surely reduce charge you!

Kidney tonic. Sip a hot cup of hot water mixed with 1 tsp of fresh honey. Cranberry juice is best. Mix the two/water, not the juice from concentrate, in a glass of cool water.

Eat half of a medium-sized melon (skins, and not to be mixed with other fruits or food) half an hour before or after a meal.

Take 6-10 glasses of clear water a day.

What's the fastest and safest way to lose weight?

It's simple, really. Eat less of everything. When all else fails, do not eat, period. Joking! Here, fasting can be good for you.

Or else, eat three or four times a day, but in small portions. Eat more vegetables, fruits, cuts, a few fat grains but, vegetable intake, etc.

How can I adopt a more positive attitude in life? Is there a happy pill I can take?

Pills can never be answer to reconciling happiness. While it is easy to pop a pill to dull your senses from the stresses of life, you are only making things worse. Running away from your problems is not the answer. Try this formula:

• **Picture** those your problems in a positive. This is the journal of your transformation. In it, put down the ideal situations you can control. Don't write down as goals those that involve things you cannot control.

Work only on yourself. Begin with a mind and body regimen such as exercise and dance classes, spa treatments and meditation and prayer.

• Flush all your pills down the toilet. Then declare, "Liberation, not addiction!" If you are an alcoholic, do likewise for your liquor bottles.

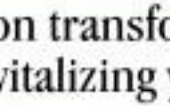
• Get active in volunteer work for the community.

• Affirm yourself by saying "My life is in my hands. And it will change for the better beginning today."

Why "love and light"?

I find my release this way for a miracle. What I write here, in essence, is for healing. Where I wish you love and light, I am sending you the energy of peace, love on earth—love, and through it, the light that can only uplift and transform you.

An love goes once again: Love and light!



INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

Flush all your pills down the toilet and declare, 'Liberation, not addiction!'

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Incline pelvic tilt on stability ball

STRENGTHENS abdominal muscles and stretches buttocks and lower back.

Equipment:

Stability ball. As a substitute, you can do this exercise on the side of sturdy bed.

Exercise technique:

1. Start by sitting on the ball with your legs apart.

2. Slowly lower yourself into the incline tilted position by moving your feet forward and simultaneously leaning back. Your head on the ball with ball behind your lower back.

3. Tilt your pelvis by contracting your abdominal muscles and pulling your hips forward toward the bottom of your ribcage.

4. Release the pelvis to starting position.

5. Do the desired number of repetitions.

Performance tips:

1. Exhale as you roll the pelvis; inhale as the return to starting position.

2. Focus on using abdominal muscles to tilt the pelvis. Do not allow your buttocks to contract.

Repetitions:

You have two options for doing this exercise:

a. Hold the tilt for 10 seconds (do not hold your breath; continue to breathe as you hold the position). Do three to five repetitions.

b. Tilt and release for 20 repetitions.

The mystery of metabolism

Lean mass is everything in your body that is not fat—muscle, bones, blood, organs, skin, hair, teeth, etc.

Lean tissue is highly metabolic, meaning it requires many calories to maintain itself. Your internal organs like your brain, kidneys and liver are working nonstop and need fuel to keep going.

Muscles, including the heart, are also "calorie-hungry" despite only a higher lean body mass or more muscle mass will burn a faster metabolic rate.

Researchers at Tufts University in Boston have found a significant similarity in lean body mass, especially muscle, in members of the same families, implying there is a genetic component involved.

Researchers also discovered that the tendency to have a slow or fast metabolism runs in families. Members of the same family tended to have the same metabolic rate.

Another metabolism expert, Dr. Claude Bouchard, confirms that weight gain/apparent is heritable and governed by genetic factors.

In his study, 12 pairs of fast- young male twins were fed 1,000 extra calories for 100 days. Theoretically, they should have all gained the same amount of weight—approximately 25 pounds since it takes 3,500 extra calories to make one pound of fat.

Instead, each twin pair gained almost exactly the same weight in the same place (upper bodies, abdomen, legs, etc.), but there was a 9 to 20-pound difference between the 12 pairs.

Another explanation people burn calories differently is called the "Edgar factor." Pidgeting is spontaneous physical activity or movement made without thinking. Examples of fidgeting are: stuffing your hair or pen/silk on the phone or jiggling your leg as you work at your desk.

In his calorie-measuring room experiment, Bavarian installed motion detectors to monitor how much movement the study participants made.

He discovered there is a big difference in the way people perform an everyday activity like sweeping. Or some people use as still as statues without moving a muscle. Others couldn't stop from changing positions every so often. Others kept getting up and moving around the room.

Bavarian calculated that fidgeting alone could burn anywhere from 200-800 calories a day. He found that the tendency to fidget or to be restless also ran in families.

In another experiment at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, researchers James Levine and Norman Eberhardt found that people who fidget while seated burn 40-50 more calories compared to people who sit motionless. Fidgeters burn 30-100 calories more per hour when they stand compared to laid back people who stand still.

To find out how much of a role fidgeting plays in weight gain, Levine and his team fed 16 normal-weight sedentary men and women an extra 1,000 calories a day for two months. The participants gained between 2-16 pounds. The ones who gained the least were the ones who did the most fidgeting.

The last explanation for calories that just seem to evaporate is called "facultative thermogenesis" or heat production not related to resting metabolic rate.

It seems that some people are "inefficient" (from a survival standpoint) calorie burners and never seem excess calories as fat or fuel for the future. Others are "inefficient" calorie burners and "waste" the excess calories as body heat.

No one can yet fully explain the mechanism behind this. Some think it is related to the "brown fat theory" (brown fat is a special kind of fat that helps regulate body temperature. Since much brown fat you have depends again on your genes.

Judith Pietrobon of the Mayo Clinic Institute of Technology found that the more obese the person, the less active the brown fat cells were. However, she also noted that exercise increases brown fat activity.

A related theory is heat is always escaping from the core of your body through your skin due to the environment. People who are tall, lean and lanky have more skin surface area than people who are short and stocky and, thus, burn more calories, because more heat is escaping through their skin.

Difficult

As the law of thermodynamics applies to everyone. Some people are just better calorie burners than others.

It's difficult to change your basal metabolic rate, but there are some things that you can do and some things that you should avoid to make the most of your unique metabolism to help you lose weight.

Your body conserves energy by lowering your metabolism when it has not eaten for quite some time. So skipping breakfast, skipping meals and going on starvation diets are counter-productive to weight loss.

You not only do you keep your body in a prolonged lowered metabolic state, the tendency is to eventually give in and binge.

Studies show that severe dieting and regular meal-skipping will result in some muscle loss, as the body "cannibalizes" muscle fibers for additional energy. The less muscle you have, the lower your resting metabolic rate.

The good news is, metabolism is not permanently lowered. It eventually bounces back when the dieter goes back to more normal eating patterns.

The bad news is, it takes quite a while for muscle tissue to return to normal, and by that time, most dieters of very low-calorie diets end up putting on more weight than they started with.

This is because the body "overcompensates" to the previous famine-like state by increasing fat-storing enzymes and other metabolic mechanisms to make as much fat as possible. And as stated, food deprivation also leads to increased appetite and big-time bingeing.

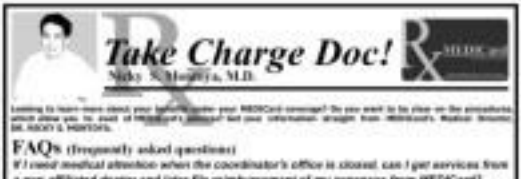
Lifting weights or some other type of resistance exercise like rubber bands, yoga, aqua exercise or Pilates with machines is a good idea to build some muscle mass to revup your basal metabolic rate.

Resistance or strength exercise is even more important as people age, because muscle atrophy from disuse includes our guts.

Loss of muscle mass is one reason middle-aged people flash heavier/are gaining weight despite eating the same amount they used to when they were young.

Lastly, someone with a slower metabolism will benefit greatly from trying to be as physically active as possible throughout the day to burn calories instead of storing them.

You may not be a natural born fidgeter, but you can learn to emulate one if you associate-buddy system with the experts at Frank Russell of the American Council of Exercise: "Sitting up is better than lying down, standing is better than sitting up, and walking is better than standing."



Take Charge Doc!

Nicky S. Mendoza, M.D.

Looking to learn more about your health benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which doctor can do what, or if MEDICard will cover intervention straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MENDOZA.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

If I need medical attention when the coordinator's office is closed, can I get services from a non-affiliated doctor and later file reimbursement of my expenses from MEDICard?

No, not unless your condition is considered to be emergency in nature. In which case, you are advised to go directly to the emergency room for immediate treatment. The ER staff will notify the medical coordinator of your admission. Otherwise, you may opt to go to accredited staff-based clinics which usually operate on extended hours and are generally open even on holidays.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Dr. Ma. Ana C. Pangan was conferred Doctor of Medicine at the University of Santo Tomas. Thereafter, she took residency training for a specialization in Obstetrics and Gynecology at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City where she now renders care to MEDICard members. Dr. Pangan joined the IMO in 1998. Members may visit her clinic at the Medical Arts Bldg., Room 506, from Mondays to Thursdays, 1 to 4 PM, Fridays, from 10 AM to 1 PM and on Saturdays from 1 to 5 in the afternoon.

Pediatrician **Dr. Rosa Maria H. Nancho** joined MEDICard in year 2000. "This Doc!", as her patients are fond to call her, addresses the healthcare needs of MEDICard members at Manila Doctors Hospital. Dr. Nancho, who also subspecializes in Adolescent Medicine, has been in the practice of her profession for more than 21 years now. For consultations, visit her clinic at Room 704, from Mondays to Fridays except Thursdays, 10 AM to 12:30 PM and on Saturdays from 11 AM to 2 PM.

At the Dipolog Medical Center in Mibang, Sta. Filomena, Dipolog City, members may seek the services of **Dr. Mario Boriosa Mopon**. Dr. Mopon, a MEDICard provider since 1997, finished Medicine at the Uy-Gallas College in 1986. He also specializes in Family Medicine and has had more than 15 years of clinical experience. Members may visit him for their needed consultations from Mondays to Saturdays, 9 AM to 12 noon and then again from 3 PM to 6 in the evening.

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